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$11 billion on the move

They're out there and they represent big revenue opportunities for your company. Who are they? They're the more than 1.2 million Canadian households who move every year. **Their spending power? $11 billion.**

If you've ever gone through a move (and chances are you have), you know that it's synonymous with spending. After all, new digs call for new stuff—and this can include everything from new furniture and home electronics to new cable providers and renovations.

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Research also shows that spending is spread out in the months before and after a move, with sweet spots for different products and services. For example, of the movers who bought home electronics for their new home, 44% purchased a TV within 3 months after their move[1]. In a consumer environment where timing and relevancy are crucial to success, this information is priceless.

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[1] Source: Mover Spending Frenzy, CP11-218, November 2011

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The play *Red* passed out paint-dipped brushes around Toronto, driving people online for a unique way to experience the show.

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ON THE COVER

We sent our creative director Stephen Stanley out into the naked city, armed only with an iPhone 4 (you read that correctly, it wasn't even a 4S) to shoot conspicuous and beautiful fontery for the sole purpose of creating this month's Instagram-inspired cover. The background image, courtesy of Carrie Rotenberg (made for a "Bring Back the Biscuit" KFC social media lobby effort), was borrowed from Insta, making the cover truly social, and illustrating the fact that designing a brand experience these days is a collaborative effort.

P.S. Readers who can identify the sources of all the letters get a prize – as promised by our CD – so happy hunting. Hashtag your pics #strategymagazine and we'll find you on Instagram. [*Ed. note: we can't guarantee that the prize will be good.*]

Insta-interest

For our annual design issue we looked at some of the new ways brands are designing experiences, specifically beyond physical parameters. A common thread is a digital presence, and harnessing social. So I've spent the last month diving into the niches of social media, and I see a ton of potential for brands in the image-centric realm of Instagram and Pinterest.

Instagram is for iPhone photo buffs, and everyone interested in looking at pics on their phone. Pinterest is more design- and female-skewing, and is the more obvious brand platform with more direct e-comm linkage. But since that's been covered a lot recently, I'm focusing on the less obvious choice here: Instagram.

The best explanation I've found to sum up Instagram is the following verbatim user profile: "I will heart the amazing, the real, the cute and the funny. I will follow the interesting and the authentic. Strangers are cool, fuck your facebook." – thejsan.

It's fascinating. This is not a community of just family, buddies and co-workers. It's strangers who find and follow others who also like pictures of architecture or nature, fashion or cute dogs (lots of cute dogs). Language is not a barrier.

The fact that it's not the closed community of Facebook appeals – less pressure to respond, etc. My son, who first introduced me to Insta, sold it by saying it made more sense than Twitter because it was easier to find interesting stuff.

I've discovered brands on Instagram that I never knew existed, such as Madura, a global home decor brand that posts Parisian scenes and pics of their new textiles. They have 40 stores worldwide, over 1,000 photos posted, over 2,000 followers, and are following over 5,000. This is good Insta math, and Instagrammers like them.

Many big brands don't take advantage of what appeals to Instagram users – such as following. Gap, with over 3,000 followers, follows six (including their CMO) and Adidas Originals with over 35,000 followers is following 35. Many bigger brands seem to post weekdays 9-5, and not as frequently as their smaller competitors. Meanwhile, a ton of bloggers and smaller brands are posting like fiends, some with impressive followings. EmbellishClothing has over 12,000 followers – equal to the Nike fanbase – and follows over 40,000.

Why should you care? Well, first off, Pinterest has been cited by Shareaholic as beating YouTube, Reddit, Google Plus, LinkedIn and MySpace for total referral traffic in January with Twitter ahead of Pinterest by a mere .01%. Both are on impressive growth trajectories. And Lululemon, which is getting close to racking up 4,000 followers, says the Insta posts feed their other social platforms, like Tumblr, Twitter and Facebook (see p. 22).

These apps are a chance to be part of a bigger (yet smaller) world, where you can see your brand through a new lens. I've discovered lots of users whose pics are brand-centric. I searched #Campbellsoup and found a collection of 32 images thusly hashtagged. It's an opportunity to show an interest in consumers, run relevant contests and "like" things.

If brands need to shift gears from mass to micro, from push to pull, to listen rather than shout – then the Pinterests and Instagrams of the world are fertile ground for learning, feedback and connection.

Cheers, mm

Mary Maddever, exec editor, *strategy*, *Media in Canada* and *stimulant*

P.S. please follow strategymagazine on Instagram - we follow back!

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EXECUTIVE EDITOR | **MARY MADDEVER** | mmaddever@brunico.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR | **STEPHEN STANLEY** | sstanley@brunico.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR | **EMILY WEXLER** | ewexler@brunico.com

COPY CHIEF | **MELINDA MATTOS** | mmattos@brunico.com

SPECIAL REPORTS EDITOR | **MEGAN HAYNES** | mhaynes@brunico.com

SENIOR WRITER | **JONATHAN PAUL** | jpaul@brunico.com

CONTRIBUTORS | **BENNETT KLEIN** | **WILL NOVOSEDLIK**

EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER | **RUSSELL GOLDSTEIN** | rgoldstein@brunico.com

ACCOUNT MANAGER | **NEIL EWEN** | newen@strategy.brunico.com

ACCOUNT MANAGER | **KELLY NICHOLLS** | knicholls@brunico.com

MARKETING CO-ORDINATOR | **LAUREN TALLEDO** | ltalledo@brunico.com

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION CO-ORDINATOR | **ROBERT LINES** | rlines@brunico.com

SENIOR MANAGER, AUDIENCE SERVICES | **JENNIFER COLVIN** | jcolvin@brunico.com

MANAGER, AUDIENCE SERVICES | **CHRISTINE MCNALLEY** | cmcnalley@brunico.com

ADMINISTRATION

PRESIDENT & CEO | **RUSSELL GOLDSTEIN** | rgoldstein@brunico.com

VP & EDITORIAL DIRECTOR | **MARY MADDEVER** | mmaddever@brunico.com

VP & CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER | **OMRI TINTPULVER** | otintpulver@brunico.com

VP ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE | **LINDA LOVEGROVE** | llovegrove@brunico.com

VP & PUBLISHER, REALSCREEN | **CLAIRE MACDONALD** | cmacdonald@brunico.com

VP & PUBLISHER, KIDSCREEN | **JOCELYN CHRISTIE** | jchristie@brunico.com

HOW TO REACH US

Strategy, 366 Adelaide Street West, Suite 100, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 1R9
Tel: (416) 408-2300 or 1-888-BRUNICO (1-888-278-6426) Fax: (416) 408-0870
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Canada wins with Cannes

There's a global battle underway for the right to claim creativity as a competitive advantage. Government-supported creative hubs are emerging throughout the world with the winning locations seeking the benefits of becoming havens for top talent and work. As unintuitive as it may sound, building a creative centre requires infrastructure, planning, coordination and commitment from a broad group of stakeholders. In short, it happens on purpose. Take one look at the evolution of Amsterdam and you'll see a well-orchestrated series of investments made by public and private corporations to help differentiate the city from the rest of Europe. The result has been nothing less than spectacular, with countless advertising, film, and media companies opening up new shops there in the past five years. Since creative superstars tend to want to work with other superstars, it can be a zero-sum game when it comes to attracting talent. So, are we, in Canada, in immediate danger of losing our ability to attract and retain top talent? Most importantly, how can we even tell if we're winning or losing?

This is why we look to the Cannes Lions each year as a barometer. There's no such thing as success without an appropriate yardstick for measurement, and while creative awards represent only one dimension of success, they do provide an excellent snapshot of where we stand today relative to others. It turns out that our situation isn't so dire, but it does require our attention and focus to improve. Last year, we managed to take home our fair share of hardware at Cannes and the Festival ranked Canada as the 14th most creative country in the world. Not bad, but we know we have it in us to do better.

This is why *strategy* is so deeply invested in promoting the Cannes Lions competition as the official trade publication sponsor in Canada along with our partners at the *Globe and Mail*, the ICA and NABS. What better way is there to measure our creative achievements than a global head-to-head with the best in the world? So as the Cannes Lions March 9 entry deadline approaches, we're not only trying to ensure that our country's strongest work is submitted, but that our best and brightest will be there in Cannes to represent, learn, experience and bring back the kind of inspiration that can only come from witnessing truly inspired global work. In particular, client representation in Cannes needs a lift because if we're to lead on an international level it will takes both sides of the creative partnership to get us there. With seven Canadian judges recently named, it's clear the rest of the world is taking notice of Canada's achievements.

Stay tuned for more in-depth Cannes coverage including announcements of the winners of the Young Lions and Marketer competitions, and watch for *strategy*'s Cannes Special Edition magazine in June that will be distributed in the *Globe and Mail* to 60,000 key business execs and influencers across Canada.

Russell Goldstein
Executive publisher, *strategy, Media in Canada* and *stimulant*

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THE POWER OF NEWSPAPERS

A STRATEGY SPONSORED SUPPLEMENT: MAY 2012 ISSUE

Strategy magazine and Newspapers Canada are teaming up to deliver a 'state of the nation' on the unique strengths of Canadian newspapers and the deep multi-platform relationships they enjoy with readers.

Strategy's Power of Newspapers supplement aims to highlight the leading companies in the industry and how they are driving real results. The story will run in the May 2012 issue targeting the national marketing and advertising community, and will be distributed at this year's INK + BEYOND conference in Toronto.

Strategy's unique format will profile your company alongside other leading firms in the industry and, through a detailed interview process, allow you to tell your company's story to explain what differentiates you from the rest.

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Leo shows off its design skills

By **Melinda Mattos**

The folks at Leo Burnett have been designing more than ad campaigns lately, from restaurant menus to boardroom tables.

"It's a new energy at Burnett," says CD Lisa Greenberg. "It doesn't matter where design lives – if there's a reason for it, why not do it?"

Take Smith, a restaurant that opened in Toronto six months ago, for example. The agency worked closely with owner Renda Abdo on everything from the restaurant's name to its visual brand identity, partnering with Toronto-based interior design firm Commute Home to turn the former nightclub into a stylish, eclectic dinner destination.

Offering up comfort food in elegant surroundings, Smith appeals to the everyman. So when it came time to design the menus, Leo Burnett reached for a material with working class appeal: newspaper.

The agency had 2,000 oversized menus printed, featuring photography of key ingredients, and then had a newspaper box made so people walking by could pick up a copy.

"Every couple of months, we change the menu," says Greenberg. "And it's almost like a DM piece for them – we've dropped them in all the neighbourhoods."

The agency also designed the restaurant's stationery, matches, coasters and more, and plan to help with merchandise take-away items like custom oils and sauces in the future.

This experience will come in handy as Leo Burnett prepares to rebrand the 65-location Earl's restaurant chain.

Leo has also done some redecorating in its own office, with the recent unveiling of agency-designed workstations and boardroom tables.

"We designed boardroom tables when I got there because I can't stand wires," says Greenberg. The high-lacquer white tables have a tiny slot where computer wires are fed into a hidden panel.

Although it took a while to get parts and prototypes made, the new tables are now on display in the offices of CCO/CEO Judy John and president/COO Dom Caruso, as well as in the agency's main boardroom.

BMW's new online dimension

By **Megan Haynes**

Cundari and BMW have created a Canadian website first: A multidirectional parallax microsite to launch the updated 3 Series.

BMW introduced three new lines for the 3 Series: luxury, sport and modern. The line was best-in-class and already BMW's best selling, says Brent Choi, CCO, Cundari. "[So] the positioning of the ad campaign was 'Impossibly better.'"

"We couldn't do a regular site, because that wouldn't be impossibly better," he explains.

To meet the challenge of showcasing three cars and living up to the tagline, Cundari created a parallax site that could scroll left and right, as well as up and down, making it perfectly optimized for computers and tablets.

In parallax scrolling, as the user scrolls across the screen, images in the foreground move at different speeds than images in the background. This gives the perception of depth and three dimensions. Traditionally, this method hasn't been used much, and when it has, the technology has been limited to one direction, usually up and down.

Cundari used the swipe functionality to enable easy head-to-head (or rim-to-rim) comparison of

the three cars' features.

"We had to be innovative with it," Choi says. "Eighteen months from now, this will be old news because everyone will be using it. Right now, nobody is."

Supporting the microsite will be a big advertising push, with OOH, TV and print ads, all driving consumers back to the website.

Nissan makes hearts race

At the Toronto Auto Show last month, Nissan unveiled its heart-thumping installation, created by Capital C, which literally took the pulse of potential drivers.

To live up to its tagline "Innovation for all," and shift the way people think about Nissan, it invited participants to stand in front of an iPad and big screen, put on a pair of headphones, and place their finger on a pulse-reading machine. Then the experience began with a barrage of rapid-fire questions and pulse-quickening music, to see physically what mix of innovation excites them most.

"[We asked] 'Do you prefer to drive on the autobahn or outdoors? Do you prefer a standard vehicle or do you prefer to modify it?'" describes Judy Wheeler, director of marketing, Nissan.

The music changed as participants made choices, and the answers and heart rates were projected on the big screen, visible to the entire audience. At the end, a car was chosen based on the responses.

The experiential tactic led to targeted marketing as Nissan could send participants more information about the specific car chosen for them.

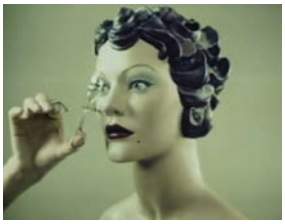
"They're going to be engaged with this," says Wheeler. "And they're going to remember and talk about it, so hopefully next time someone is shopping for a vehicle, Nissan will be on the shopping list."

After participants finished, a mosaic of their face, heart rate, and car best suited to them was splashed across the big screen and emailed to them to be shared or printed.

Wheeler says she can foresee use for the technology at future shows, on the showroom floor, or even once someone is behind the wheel of a Nissan.

This installation follows their Nissan Innovation Challenge, a webisode series that asked Facebook followers what innovation meant to them. The top 200 were asked to submit an ad campaign idea, with five finalists flown to Toronto to pitch their idea to Wheeler, Tony Chapman, CEO at Capital C, and Jay Bertram, president of TBWA\Canada and Latin America. Three finalists' videos will be released in webisodes on Nissan's Facebook page, with the winner named in mid-March, who will see their idea turned into an actual ad campaign by TBWA, and also take home a new car. **MH**

Pirate donates ad bounty to archives



Terry O'Reilly and the Pirate Group, the audio production company he co-founded in 1990, made a significant contribution to Canadian advertising education by donating more than 25 years of campaign material from iconic North American brands to McMaster University.

The archive, thought to be the largest of its kind in Canada, documents the creation of approximately 50,000 radio and TV commercials, covering off brands including Molson, Coca-Cola, McDonald's and GM, and featuring celebrities like Leslie Nielsen, Ellen DeGeneres and Kiefer Sutherland.

"We wanted the work to be preserved. Advertising is the great mirror of society," says O'Reilly. "Students can study the arcs of major Canadian brands, how language and styles have changed, and they can analyze the evolution."

Included in the archive are concept presentations, casting sessions, script edits, as well as final commercials, including iconic Super Bowl, Hockey Hall of Fame and Eaton's ads [*Ed. note: In case you were about to forget "Aubergine" (pictured)*]. **JP**

Mint keeps currency current via AR & Taxali

Coin collecting is typically associated with grandparents and nerds, but that may change thanks to a partnership between the Royal Canadian Mint and Canadian artist Gary Taxali, which includes a foray into augmented reality.

Arranged by Young & Rubicam, the Taxali collaboration aims to freshen up the Mint's image and, with any luck, generate new interest.

"We're trying to expand our customer base across all demographics by appealing beyond the traditional collector," says Alex Reeves, senior manager, communications, Royal Canadian Mint. "We want people to constantly expect new things from the Mint."

Taxali was commissioned to create six celebratory quarters for the Mint's 2012 gift sets, which went on sale last month, conveying the themes of birthday, wedding, tooth fairy, new baby, O Canada and holiday, with his grinning, 1930s-style cartoon characters.

"I was elated to make something that would live forever," says Taxali. "I was also excited that the Mint was taking a new direction and using my style of art, which is not typical of the artists they have used in the past."

These coins mark the first time in the Mint's history that it's allowed an artist to change the typography on its coins, with "25 Cents," "2012" and "Canada" all rendered in Taxali's font, Chumply.

The wedding coin also incorporates augmented reality technology, allowing iPad and smartphone users to see the interlinked wedding bands come to life, thanks to tech by interactive media company Daqri and AR expert Helen Papagiannis.

Combine the new tech and high-profile artwork with launch events at Toronto's trendy Spoke Club and the AGO, as well as a flurry of earned media, and it's fair to say coin collecting just got a little cooler. **MM**

Less is more with Instagram in your marketing mix

BY **JONATHAN PAUL**

Newer micro-social networks, like photo-sharing platform Instagram and online pin-board Pinterest, are attracting more focused followings than broader-based elders Facebook and Twitter

The CTC and WestJet post images via Instagram to connect with customers around their travel interests.

The new trend in social networking is about less being more. Amid the barrage of tweets, LinkedIn updates and Facebook alerts, some newer, fast-growing, more focused followings are sharing a minimalist social experience.

The Instagram app is one of these young niche networks that's really starting to catch on. Within eight months of its October 2010 launch, it had attracted five million users, and by the end of last year, that number had climbed to 14 million, with 400 million images posted. No wonder Apple named Instagram its 2011 iPhone App of the Year in December.

Where macro-social networks like Facebook and Twitter meet broad social media needs, Instagram uses a single common activity, mobile photo sharing, to help users connect around shared interests. The mechanics are very much like Twitter, minus status updates and links to articles. You sign up, you post pictures (which can be filtered to resemble Polaroids or other retro photography styles) and you qualify them with captions and hashtag subjects. People follow you and you follow others, enabling everyone to focus on images involving their passion points.

In addition to following those within their existing social network, Instagrammers can follow any of the "Instafamous" popular crowd whose photography or subject matter they like, or brands, such as Old Spice's Man Your Man Could Smell Like.

Of course, you can link your posts to Facebook and Twitter as well, and for some, the new app activity is augmenting usage of those forums.

The rise of these tightly curated micro-social networks is providing brands more targeted and easily managed ways of carrying on conversations with customers.

On the U.S. and international front, big brands like Starbucks,

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INSTAGRAM IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAP INTO ADVOCATES, WHO ARE **THE MOST VOCAL PROPONENTS** FOR THEIR PARTICULAR SOCIAL GROUP

Redbull, Adidas Originals, Whole Foods and Kate Spade have been making savvy use of Instagram, and even U.S. President Barack Obama joined the club earlier this year.

Here at home, the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC), in collaboration with DDB Vancouver, has been using the platform to reach advocates for travel throughout Canada, leveraging it to create visual stories depicting the kinds of experiences available to potential travellers. At press time, the CTC had 671 Instagram followers, follows about double that and responds to comments, which bodes well for future growth.

HMV uses Instagram to share images of in-store events with its followers.

Its presence on the platform helps it to stay true to its brand identity, which is focused on showcasing Canada's breadth from a traveller's perspective, says Cosmo Campbell, CD, DDB Vancouver.

"Instagram is an opportunity to tap into advocates, who are the most vocal proponents for their particular social group," says Campbell. "It's a great way to capture experiences, and people are usually taking photos of things they're passionate about. You can very clearly define these advocate groups and be able to pull in that content and use it to promote experiences within the country."

One way the CTC has leveraged the platform, aside from reposting images from people's trips, has been by pulling in content for opportunistic social campaigns around events like Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge's visit to Canada, TIFF and Fashion Week. On its profile, CTC encourages users to post their travel-related pics using the hashtag "#ExploreCanada," giving it permission to repost them.

Last month, the CTC also rolled out a revamped website for foreign visitors, Keepexploring.ca, which offers an interactive taste of what a trip to Canada entails. It's an experience that Campbell says doesn't centre on "the traditional holiday snapshot." Though not the focus of the site, Instagram will be built into it, aggregating shared content from users. The CTC plans on introducing another Instagram-powered component down the road that will allow travellers to track their trips to Canada, documenting them on the website.

"[The website's] not pushing out in a traditional marketing voice where it's the organization trying to tell you something," says Campbell. "It's more of a two-way conversation between the travellers who are really experiencing the country as they're here."

WestJet also uses Instagram as a way to let travellers share their experiences with the airline and their friends. It also shares its own content. Since it started using the platform last summer, the company has steadily built up a following of approximately 1,800. The goal, says Greg Hounslow, advisor, emerging media, WestJet, is to keep the brand top of mind between flight or vacation purchases in the most efficient way possible.

"As a low-cost carrier we always consider the resources that are necessary to sustain our presence on any social platform," says Hounslow. "We are already sharing photos on Facebook and Twitter. We balance the potential value in terms of brand awareness and affinity with the resources that are required. Instagram is a good fit with our overall strategy."

Hounslow adds that a lot of WestJet's Instagram traffic is driven from its Twitter and Facebook accounts. When the company started out on the platform, it was a method of sharing photos with its Twitter followers, but it's since become a more efficient way of targeting WestJet fans around social media promotions like WestJet's Winglet Wednesdays, which started in January 2010 and encourages WestJet passengers to share pics of their plane's winglets on Wednesdays via its social media properties.

"Micro-social media networks like Instagram are very interesting because they allow us to continue building our own network without adding major complexity or increasing the amount of manpower that we are allocating to our existing social media activities," says Hounslow. "There are many photo-sharing applications and sites out there. Instagram sets itself apart by adding networking functionality and features that are similar to Twitter."

HMV Canada, which is very active on macro-social networks like Facebook and Twitter, is on Instagram because it's a place where its customers play, but also because

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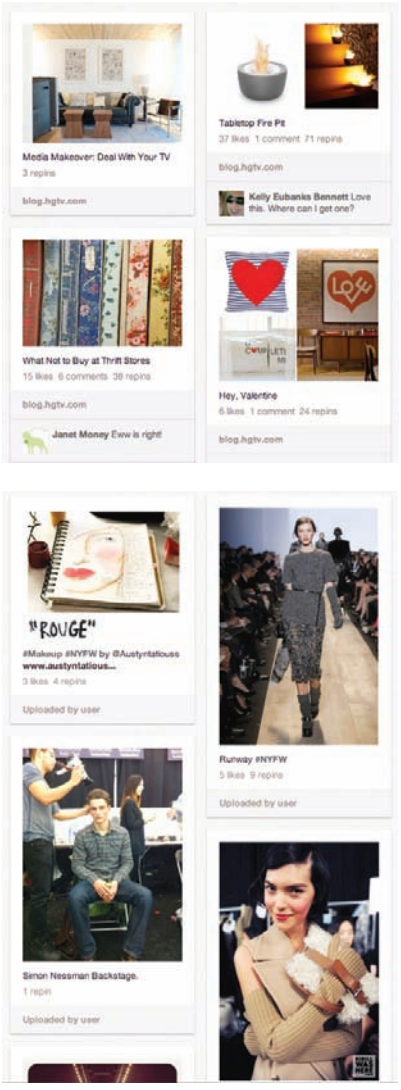

Brands like Michael Kors and HGTV have started experimenting with Pinterest, posting images targeted to users based on their interests.

director of marketing, HMV Canada. "They appreciate that we are active on these networks."

The new fringe micro-networks also offer advertisers new creative opportunities to seek out customers via their shared interests.

Take inspiration-sharing site Pinterest, for example. The female-skewing image-based platform has put a decidedly unique spin on users engaging around mutual passion points. It's a virtual pin-board that allows people to share things they find interesting by category, like a favourite toy, recipe or book.

According to Google Ad Planner, about 13 million people worldwide visit Pinterest over the course of a month. And that number is climbing: comScore recently reported that the site had seen a 55% gain in unique U.S. visitors between November and December 2011.

Max Valiquette, managing director of intellectual property and content development, Bensimon Byrne, describes Pinterest as a place "populated by influential people who like to see good-looking products that they might buy integrated into the images they're looking at," adding, "brands should start a page right away and not be afraid to offer a coupon if someone clicks through one of their images."

MAX VALIQUETTE ON PINTEREST: BRANDS SHOULD START A PAGE RIGHT AWAY AND NOT BE AFRAID TO OFFER A COUPON IF SOMEONE CLICKS THROUGH ONE OF THEIR IMAGES

Big U.S. brands active on Pinterest include retailers like Nordstrom, West Elm and Whole Foods, as well as celebrity brands like Martha Stewart and Michael Kors and media brands like HGTV and *Real Simple* magazine. But adoption has been slower in Canada.

Still, if the propensity to jump on board alternatives to the broad social media channels exhibited by CTC, WestJet and HMV is any indication, expect Instagram- and Pinterest-specific program proliferation.

For its part, Pinterest has been increasingly successful in encouraging traffic to bricks and mortar locations for retailers. According to Monetate, a U.S. provider of independent website testing, targeting and personalization services, Pinterest generated a same-store referral traffic increase of 389% to five specialty retailers from July to December 2011.

Of course, WestJet, HMV and the CTC stress the importance of advertisers having a hand on every piece of the "social media puzzle" to be truly effective in using the space. That means on top of the macro-social networks, marketers need to establish themselves on different micro-social networks – be they image- or location-based – to reach people in a variety of niche-targeted ways. That's why the three brands all also exist on location-based micro networks like Foursquare and Gowalla – two platforms that have really gained traction with people over the last few years.

"The beauty of the collective group of these networks is that it creates a digital ecosystem that tends to start to feed itself, and the messages get passed on and just build bigger and stronger connections with people," says Campbell.

the platform helps it remain a youthful and credible source of info within its product categories.

Using it primarily to showcase products, as well as photos from in-store autograph sessions and other events, HMV has amassed over 450 followers since joining a year ago.

"People trust that we won't bombard them with irrelevant messaging," says Saundra Bianchi,

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BY **EMILY WEXLER**

TFO'S ICONIC UPDATE

For its 25th anniversary, Groupe Média Télévision Française Ontario (TFO) wanted to modernize its image and broaden its appeal beyond Franco-Ontarians to Francophones across Canada. Having started to revamp its content a year ago, TFO enlisted Lowe Roche to bring its image up to date as well.

Since TFO is commercial-free, Monica Ruffo, CEO of Lowe Roche, says "the identity ends up being used in all sorts of formats to fill the holes, so it has to be really engaging."

Ruffo explains that the design process was highly collaborative. "We interviewed a ton of stakeholders, we also had session groups with viewers. We tried to make sure that everyone's point of view was taken into account, which is one of the keys to success when you're refreshing something as iconic as TFO."

The previous logo and look was "familiar television visual language," says Dave Douglass, co-CCO at Lowe Roche. There was nothing particularly bold or iconic about it, and it used only one colour – blue.

Lowe Roche's hue-infused design incorporates an entire palette, which differentiates the various content categories of TFO (such as TFO Kids or TFO Films), and also helps keep the look fresh, since the branding is on screen so often.

"It had to appeal to TFO's traditional viewers but also open it up. So it was actually quite a challenge to not alienate people who were already watching TFO," Ruffo says. For example, a flag encasing the logo is a symbol meant to "capture the pride of the Franco-Ontarian," explains Ruffo.

The new look is rolling out on-air, online and everywhere else TFO puts its stamp. To see a video of the rebrand in action, visit Strategyonline.ca.

BEFORE & AFTER

BEFORE & AFTER

SKY SPA ELEVATES ITS LOOK

When Montreal-based Sky Spa was set to expand by opening two new locations in the province, it went to Lg2boutique for a visual makeover. The goal, says Claude Auchu, VP, managing director, Lg2boutique, was to create a more high-end feel, while maintaining the spa's inclusive vibe. Auchu likens the old look and logo to that of a hair salon, while the new identity is a bit more sophisticated.

Lg2 also created television and radio spots to introduce the new branding, and revamped Sky Spa's website, the first phase of which was launched before the holidays, with the second phase launching this month.

Auchu says the inspiration behind the new logo came from the brand DNA and what makes Sky Spa unique – namely that it's located high above the city (the new Quebec City location is on the 17th floor). Countering the woodsy, isolated retreats that some associate with the spa experience, Sky Spa is an urban oasis.

"We came to the idea of Sky Spa as vertical letters that play like architecture, with floors and windows and verticality to the skyline," says Auchu. He explains that this idea dictated the font: "We kept something that is really clean and contemporary, modernizing the old Helvetica feeling that they were using before."

Sky Spa's new look can be seen in-spa on everything from bathrobes, towels and written materials to employee uniforms. "It was a rebrand on every touchpoint to be sure different kinds of experiences are really linked to the new perception that we want to give the spa," Auchu says.

DESIGNING AN EXP

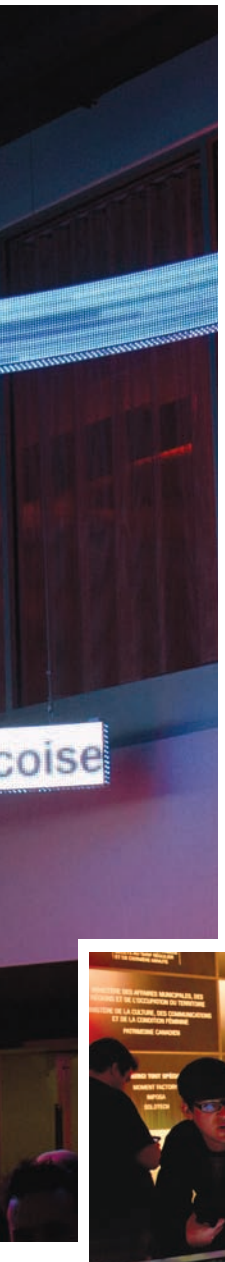
BY **MEGAN HAYNES**

How does a customer feel after interacting with a brand? How do brands build emotional ties that resonate beyond the physical parameters? How can brands design a 360° experience?

Experiential design can be as complex as exciting the senses, the way ticket vendor La Vitrine did, but it can also include finding new ways of connecting, such as Lululemon's foray into social media, or tailoring an environment to meet specific consumer insights, like Pure Pharmacy in B.C. did with its reassuring redesign.

Read on to learn how five brands designed signature experiences by tapping emotions and stimulating the mind.

Above: La Vitrine's one-metre column is adorned with LED lights, while curving screens can display plays and concerts or transform the area into a light show. **Right:** touch-screens at the base of the column allow visitors to find shows on an interactive map of the city.



La Vitrine beckons with tech

How do you make ticket sales cool? You bring in Moment Factory – a hot design studio that specializes in interactive light shows.

La Vitrine is a local ticket hub in Montreal. It recently moved into new digs at the corner of Sainte-Catherine Street and Saint-Laurent Boulevard – right in the heart of the entertainment district. The goal with the new high traffic location was to engage new and younger audiences, pull tourists in off the street and integrate social media sharing. La Vitrine aims to be a beacon of culture in Montreal where everyone goes to get tickets, explains Eric Fournier, partner and executive producer, Moment Factory.

"They really wanted to create a very animated centre," he says. So Moment Factory created a two-storey interactive digital sculpture as the focal point of the very large space.

Moment Factory has been building an international reputation for innovative projects for years. The team created a studio for French game show *Le Tricheur* where the entire stage is a touchable and interactive screen for participants, moving and reacting to game play, and, recently, the team completed Madonna's stage and light show for her Super Bowl half-time number, to media accolades.

La Vitrine boasts a six-metre-high ceiling, is surrounded by windows and has concrete floors. So Moment Factory put a one-metre column in the middle of the room, constructed with hundreds of LED lights that travel all the way to the ceiling. Five flat LED screens protrude from the column and curve around the ceiling, and flat touch-screens surround the base of the column to provide visitors the option of looking up their intended shows.

La Vitrine isn't meant to compete with its online presence, rather the physical location is intended to create an engaging and energetic atmosphere that draws passersby and encourages people to see a show.

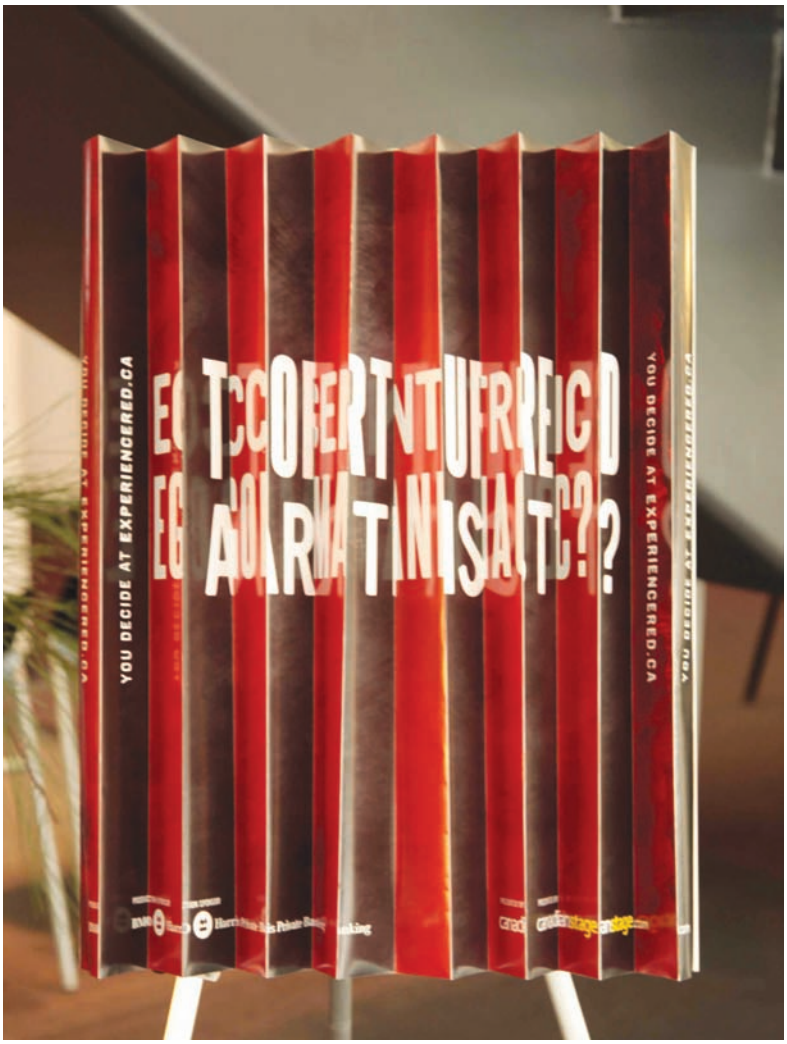
The structure serves two purposes, says Fournier. First, it can act as a purely informational vehicle, with the touch-screens displaying the locations of plays and concerts on a city map. Events can be filtered by date, location and genre, while the show descriptions can be shared over social media channels or email.

But the real meat-and-potatoes of the display comes from light-show loops Moment Factory created. Working with X-Agora technology, the light shows, displayed on the column and ceiling screens, change based on the time of day and the mood the team is trying to set. For example, one loop tells the story of going to a show at night, says Julie Armstrong-Boileau, communication head, Moment Factory. All of which creates great fodder for viewers to share via pics with their social media network (visit Strategyonline.ca to see a video).

Fournier says this is just the start for the La Vitrine piece and that the team hopes to introduce more interactivity into the installation.

For an example of what Moment Factory is capable of, consider its holiday installation for Canadian Tire, which saw a Christmas tree erected in Toronto's Union Station, with lights powered by social media. As people across the world used keywords such as "Christmas" and "snowflake" in their posts, the lights lit up and changed colour. Fournier says it would be completely possible for the light show at La Vitrine to be powered by tweets from the public or even applause in the theatres.

Red commands audience engagement (literally)



ExperienceRed.ca is being literal: the folks at Zulu Alpha Kilo and theatre company Canadian Stage actually want audience members to experience the play *Red* – as in take on a role of one of the main characters.

The play is about temperamental painter Mark Rothko in a fictionalized account of his biggest-ever commission in the '50s. *Red*, which has only two characters – Rothko and Ken, his fictional assistant – ran from November to December in Toronto, and is now on tour across Canada.

ExperienceRed.ca's main purpose was to drive ticket sales (Canadian Stage saw its largest-ever presale numbers for an opening night), attract a younger demographic (specifically youth who'd never seen a stage play), and promote a play in a way that had never been done before. So Zulu designed a website that puts the potential audience members in the role of Ken, and lets would-be thespians dust off their acting chops.

All promotion, including paintbrushes dipped in red paint that were distributed across the city, plus unique accordion posters that offered different perspectives depending on which angle it was viewed from, drove traffic back to the website.

"I think we achieved our goal of promoting the play in a way that

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Above: paintbrushes were distributed around the city where young, artistic folks hang out, driving traffic back to the website, where actor Jim Mazzone, as Mark Rothko, yells at the participant. **Opposite page:** accordion-style posters offer audiences a different perspective: is Rothko a tortured artist or eccentric egomaniac?

had never been done before," says Zak Mroueh, president and creative director at Zulu.

The website uses webcams, computer mics and motion-sensing technology to facilitate the interaction, while the storyline is non-linear, changing as the "actor" follows or disobeys Rothko's authority. Step out of line, and the user gets sworn at. Follow instructions meticulously and Rothko offers to take the participant out for a drink.

Each user is meant to experience the show differently and come away with an opinion of Rothko as either a tortured artist or egomaniac, says Mroueh.

"The inspiration came from the nuance of the theatre experience, where there are twists and turns [to a play]. I think we wanted to create the twists and turns in a complementary experience. But we also wanted people to be able to engage with it more than once. So rather than it being a lean-back mirror of the theatre experience, we wanted something that people might be surprised the first time [they go] through, but then try to correct their path," says Sean Gannan, creative director, Zulu Alpha Kilo. "It's a really intimate and intense experience."

Small subtleties have been built into the experience, says Gannan. As people lean closer, the camera angle gets closer to Rothko, giving the appearance of both parties leaning in. Shift left or right and Rothko shifts in the other direction. "It all makes it feel more real and like you're having a genuine interaction," says Gannan.

The website was also designed in a way to reach people without webcams (a scolding Rothko yells at the viewer for not having the right equipment), Gannan explains.

"We didn't want to leave people with a disappointing experience."

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Source: QMi Research.

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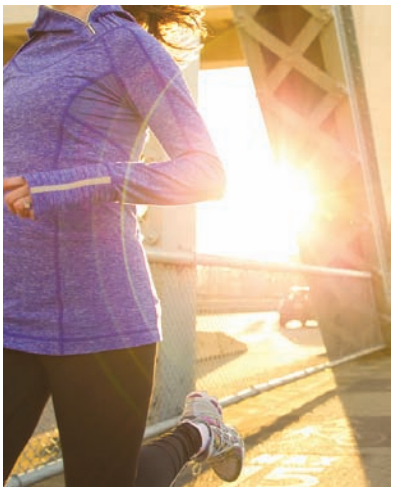
Lululemon inspires socially

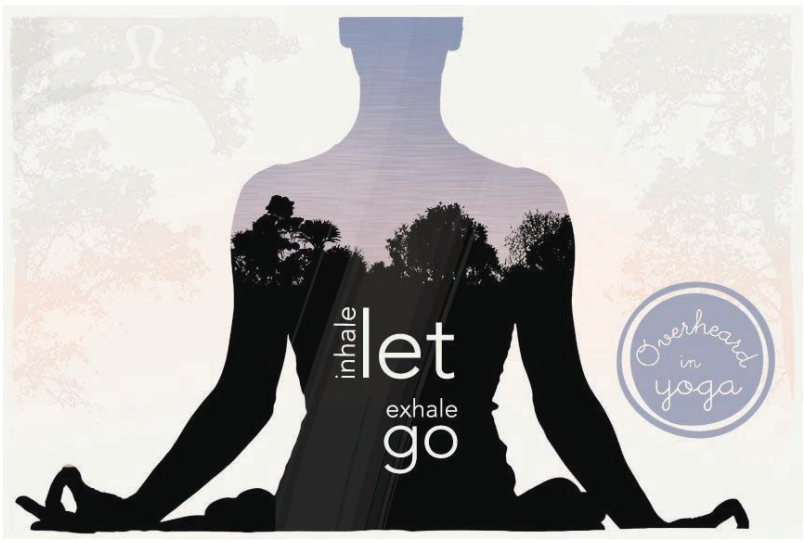
Lululemon says it didn't design its social media presence – it grew organically.

"We go where our customers go," says Lesia Dallimore, brand experience manager, commerce, Lululemon. "If our guest came to us on XYZ platform, we'd probably just jump in there."

But regardless of the organic seeding, each of its social media platforms is designed to inspire, educate and challenge its customers. Everything it posts is meant to encourage healthier lifestyles, challenge guests to new goals, or create conversation around the community. The social experience is simply an extension of its in-store philosophy, Dallimore says.



The company has a robust social media presence: more than 500,000 Facebook fans on its corporate page alone (it also has individual store pages), 175,000 followers on Twitter and hundreds of videos on YouTube (including the now-viral Shit Yogis Say, staring Dallimore herself).



Lululmon's social team encourages followers to let go, be inspired and run, with images posted on Instagram to its 3,000+ followers.

The company is also on Tumblr, Foursquare, Instagram and Zite. At press time, they've started playing with Pinterest. Oh, and they blog too.

"We're all huge internet nerds," says Dallimore, adding that the team tailors each platform differently, utilizing it in the best way to promote challenges or inspirational and educational experiences.

Instagram, for example, is purely image based. While brands are just now flocking to Instagram, Lululemon's been on the platform since July 2011 and has one of the largest followings in Canada with more than 3,000 followers.

The company often posts photos of challenges to subscribers, interesting graffiti or quotes, and of course, yoga poses. These are interjected with product photos and behind-the-scenes shots, all cross-connected across its other platforms, making sharing the photos easy.

"Instagram really feeds a lot of the other channels," Dallimore says. "We use it for Tumblr, Facebook and Twitter."

In comparison, Lulu's Facebook presence is designed to create conversations and educate fans about the community. Each of its locations has a personal Facebook page run by store employees, designed to extend

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online the community the company tries to create in store.

"Facebook, for us, is a digital kitchen party," says Dallimore. "When you walk into a Lululemon store, we don't just want to hand you some gear, we want to chat with you, find out your goals. If you want to know the best place to get a coffee down the street, we want to tell you because we're experts in our community. And those are the same conversations we're having on Facebook."

And they continually explore new channels to reach their audience, she says. The company recently became the first brand on Zite, a customizable magazine on the iPad/iPhone.

Zite pulls in content from different sources across the web – mostly news outlets and blogs. The app then starts pulling in content from other sources based on articles the users read. Lululemon is the first brand to feed its blog through Zite – thus integrating its content into customers' personalized magazines. The app is designed to find like sources – so when customers read the blog through Zite, Dallimore says, it will pull up similar inspirational stories about active lifestyles, health tips, and, of course, yoga news.

"All [social media channels] serve different purposes for us," she says. "There are different people using them, we have different conversations in each one, so each has its own separate strategy. But we really just try to inspire 'her' in all sorts of ways."

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GEN Y 24H, STAR INC, CASA, Reseau Contact, Clin d'oeil, Autonet, Steal the Deal, Cool, and more.

18+ Mlle, 7 Jours, Clin d'oeil, selected TVA shows, 24H, CASA, Canoe Travel, Le Sac Plus, Yoopa, and more.

BOOMERS SUN News, Argent, Prise 2, selected TVA shows, Mi Casa, Lundi, La Promesse, The SUNs, Journal de Montreal, and more.

Source: QMi Research.

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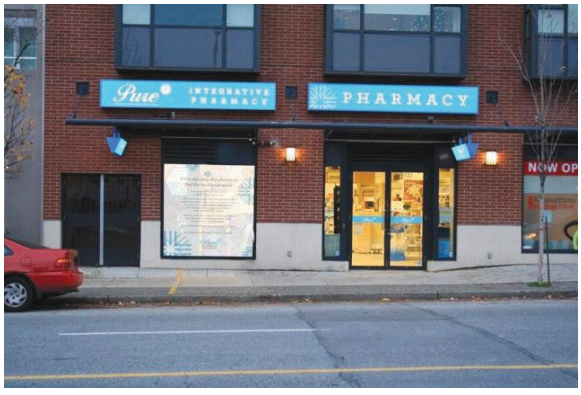
Pure dispenses calm to launch novel hybrid retail concept

Spas and pharmacies don't have a ton in common. Sterile white, clinical smells and overcrowded shelves tend to be closer descriptors of Canadian pharmacies than the zen-like oasis of your typical spa. But Bob Mehr, owner of three-year-old, B.C.-based Pure Pharmacy, wants to provide customers with a different experience.

RIGHT WHEN THE PERSON WALKS IN, THEY KNOW WE'RE IN **THE BUSINESS OF HEALTH**



Top: Pure's philosophy is splashed against the walls, while low shelving and natural wood creates an open, organic space. **Opposite page:** Owner Bob Mehr stands in an early prototype version of the store.

Mehr's rebrand is based on combining the three methods of pharmacy: medicinal, homeopathic and naturopathic. Tapping an underserved niche, the store is targeting the baby boomer who wants the best of all worlds, and it will carry a wider range of products, including homeopathic remedies and items typically found in health food stores, as well as regular pharmacy wares. It will also have experts from all three fields of pharmacology on hand to answer questions and help customers navigate unfamiliar terrain.

The pharmacy category in Canada is dominated by major chains offering exclusive products, killer loyalty programs and one-stop convenience. So designing a unique retail experience is smart positioning. And as the niche retail market is growing, experiential design is key to entry.

Inspired by similar concepts in the U.S., Mehr brought on independent creative director and consultant Marc Stoiber to recreate the traditional-looking pharmacy top to bottom. They'll begin rolling out the new store design in the brand's three existing locations in March.

"We have the grey tsunami happening," says Stoiber, "and [baby boomers] are being proactive, getting informed and taking things into their own hands. In North America, 95% of health care spend is on curing sickness. Only 5% is on actually encouraging wellness. This [store] is tapping into that sentiment that people want to switch gears from waiting till they get sick and then curing themselves."

This is an established model in Europe and an emerging one in North America, says Stoiber. The integrated pharmacy model has a wide presence in Germany and France, while a similar concept called Pharmaca has been popping up at a rapid pace across the southern U.S. In Canada, few locations exist combining all three types of treatment, and none are models that could be rolled out among multiple stores on a wider scale, says Stoiber. It was a niche market waiting to be tapped,

but one he predicts will grow and expand across Canada as more seniors take control over their own health.

Getting people into the stores will be a slow build, as promotion will be limited to store flyers, says Stoiber. Driving customers into the store, and away from the "grocery store model" of pharmacy, will largely be a grassroots effort, as word-of-mouth spreads, he says.

Once a customer is in store, the big challenge will be to not overwhelm them. Based on research, they found that people are intimidated by their surroundings if they don't often patronize health food stores, and vice versa for pharmacies. In order to bridge that gap, Stoiber says everything about the store, from the layout and signage to the décor and teal blue and white palette, has been designed to create a calming spa-like atmosphere with the focus on the customer's health. For example, the first thing customers see is the teal blue pharmacy sign and counter at the back. "So right when the person walks in, they know we're in the business of health," says Mehr.

A consultation area, with comfy couches, is tucked into an alcove that can be closed off for privacy, allowing customers to freely discuss health options – whether medicinal, homeopathic or naturopathic.

"We want to talk to them about their diet, nutrition and stress levels. We want to see if there are any other ways we can help," Mehr says. "We want to look at the patient as a whole."

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Colton's taps exclusivity

This is a store most of us won't be allowed to shop at.

In fact, most of the team on the project won't be able to get memberships.

But that's all part of the brand identity that Colton's, a new store in Richmond, B.C., is going for. Think of this store as an über-upscale Costco – only instead of selling bulk meat and ketchup, it sells high-end luxury designer clothing. The store launches in April, and members, of which there will only be 200 to 400, will pay $7,500 a year to be allowed access. Members are also required to maintain a $17,500 credit each year for in-store purchases (which may seem excessive, but a single suit can run up $30,000).

But once you're in, it'll be a completely different experience than any other high-end retailer, says Chris Dallin, director of branding and design at Karacters, the DDB design agency brought on to create the overall Colton's brand.

"From an emotional point of view, we came up with a brand identity around the idea of 'Your luxury confidante.' So it's this whole idea of being on the inside. It's beyond just luxury, it's that feeling of being in a club," says Dallin. "You won't be sold to, but listened to."

High-end retailers should take note: Andrea Sampson, VP strategy insight and planning, Cundari, says this type of store could definitely take off. Sampson, who has done extensive research into the affluent shopper, says that as luxury becomes more accessible (with more stores carrying luxury items and posh brands carrying merchandise at lower price points) affluent shoppers are likely to migrate towards the ultra-exclusive shopping experience, be it private boutiques or personal shoppers.

The idea for Colton's came from owner Howard Colton, president of Richmond-based Colton International, which owns luxury watch distributor ToyWatch Canada, and is the exclusive distributor of high-end Italian fashion to BlueFly, an online luxury retailer. Using his connections, Colton would set up friends and family with discounts on designer fashions, an idea he believed he could sell on a wider scale.

Dallin says all of the merchandise will be discounted up to 70% off, and shoppers will have access to hot-off-the-runway fashions and exclusive pieces not available in other locations – both of which will be key draws to encourage members to shell out an annual fee, but it'll be the personal connection and exclusive experience that keeps shoppers coming back.

The store will cater to the very wealthy,

Below: When Colton's business cards are stacked, the magenta along the edges becomes apparent. **Opposite page:** The invitation slip reveals a laser-cut message about style.

FROM AN EMOTIONAL POINT OF VIEW, WE CAME UP WITH A BRAND IDENTITY AROUND THE IDEA OF **'YOUR LUXURY CONFIDANTE.'** SO IT'S THIS WHOLE IDEA OF BEING ON THE INSIDE. IT'S BEYOND JUST LUXURY, IT'S THAT FEELING OF BEING IN A CLUB

predominantly Asian population of Richmond, but will also target wealthy shoppers in West Vancouver. "We needed an identity that sold exclusivity and luxury," says Dallin.

Everything from the tagline ("Personal Couture") to messaging on brochures will be tailored to this idea of creating a club environment for shoppers. For example, the invitation invites future members to "become one of the few, the proud, and the impeccably dressed." Most members will be picked directly from Colton's personal address book, says Dallin, with others coming on board as a result of word-of-mouth.

By limiting the size of the clientele to 400, Dallin says the Colton's team will be able to offer personalized service and name recognition for each of the clients, creating a friendlier atmosphere, as well as differentiating from other high-end stores that cater to everyone.

The store encompasses the entire penthouse of a 15-storey building, styled in a classic Parisian boutique look, with a wrap around balcony offering views of the city and mountains from all sides. It is designed to be able to host a fashion runway, says designer Gary Van Dijk of AA Robins Architect, the firm brought on to design the space.

With white Carrera marble floors and contemporary furnishings, the space was designed to be clutter-free and feel spacious, says Van Dijk. For example, the change rooms will be large enough to have chaises, and garments will be hung with about a foot of space between hangers to avoid overcrowding the shelves.

"This is not storefront," Van Dijk says. "This is an exclusive club. It's a different world."

Dallin says Colton's is simply ahead of the curve. "I really think these customized, exclusive, personalized retail experiences are going to be something you see in the future," he says. "These people don't want to be fighting or waiting in line for that Tom Ford suit. They want to be in a more personal environment."

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BY **JONATHAN PAUL**

HOW WOULD YOU SPARK A TRIP TO THE PARK?

Parks Canada is strategizing. In light of decreasing revenues and fewer visits to parks and historical sites due to a lack of awareness and less leisure time, the federal agency recently teamed up with Toronto-based PR firm Veritas, with a $395,000 two-year contract to determine how it can reignite interest.

A key challenge, says Andrew Campbell, VP, external relations and visitor experience, Parks Canada, is raising awareness in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal on a limited budget of $1 million a year. Connections with Canadians in those cities haven't been strong historically, but have been improving, especially following Parks Canada's recent centennial and the 125th anniversary of Banff National Park.

Parks Canada wants to sustain that momentum by figuring out how to effectively cross-promote previous efforts, including the National Parks Project, a TV series produced in part to celebrate the centennial. It featured 13 musicians taking trips to national parks across Canada, collaborating with filmmakers on short films and soundtracks capturing their collective impressions of the landscape. The transmedia effort included an online hub where the media pertaining to each trip interconnected through a "virtual park," and included content like photographs, artist bios, park info and bonus video content.

Other areas of focus for Veritas are investigating better use of social media and identifying new media opportunities, including possible advertising in high-traffic areas like Toronto's Yonge-Dundas Square.

"[We want to know if there are] opportunities that we don't know about that we can use to reach a broad swath of the Canadian population and have a significant impact for the best value we can get," says Campbell.

Parks Canada has also been investigating new moneymaking strategies. In November, it announced it would launch a beaver-logoed merchandise line, and in February it signed a deal with Roots and branded merchandising company Cotton Candy to handle the program. The line will be sold at parks and online by spring 2012, and in Roots stores starting this year, with full rollout by 2013. Parks Canada has also introduced new culinary programs, like a wine festival at Ontario's Fort Malden, and has formed a licensing agreement with National Geographic to produce guidebooks.

We asked a stable of advertising, marketing and consumer products licensing experts to tell us how they would go about reviving the Parks Canada brand.

SASHA GRUJICIC
SVP GROUP STRATEGY, AEGIS MEDIA

While the National Parks Project was beautifully representative of Parks Canada, the expression itself was a symptom of the problem. It's stuck reliving its past and not creating its future.

I would take the themes of film and music and turn those into event-based partnerships with the likes of Live Nation, creating unique experiences that were digitally connected (social + Livestream).

I would look to other partnerships in newer artistic expression areas like storytelling events, intellectual conferences and contemporary fine art programs, increasing the breadth of the potential visitors.

And I would source revenue from event ticketing, sponsorship, visitation (from events and conferences) and revenue sharing.

Finally, I would encourage each event to leave behind a sustainable relic for future visitors to engage with, [whether] a geo-cached video file or a physical structure.

SHARON MACLEOD

BRAND BUILDING DIRECTOR, UNILEVER CANADA

Why don't we spend more time in Canada's parks? It's because Parks Canada is happy being a secret. Fabulous yurts (fancy tents) in great places don't matter if I don't know about them.

Want a robust visitor business? Create robust partnerships with adventure companies and a luxury hotelier (Four Seasons comes to mind) who can create unforgettable experiences worth the effort to get there.

I do think the parks are missing the big picture. Hits on their website and this summer's traffic are small. Luxury eco-tourism is the long-term solve. Parks Canada needs to open itself up to partner with other companies who can create a brilliant experience.

Want more visitors? Call Tony Pigott at JWT Ethos. Tony knows how to use unconventional models that worked for Sickkids and U of T. It generates revenue and covers the cost, meaning they deliver positive return on investment. Imagine that!

EMILY BAIN

PARTNER, STRATEGIC PLANNING DIRECTOR, JOHN ST.

Canada is a hot property right now and Parks Canada should be leading the pack.

One idea is to create a questionnaire on the website that ranks you and your family's true Canadian camping skills and then customizes experiences. Complete packages could be offered that could include gear.

Parks Canada also needs to draw some excitement. Bring the national parks to urban congested areas and recreate the park experience – sounds, air, visuals, with a downloadable app that can provide you with park information.

It also needs to be there when Canadians are searching for vacations online, connecting via keyword searches, partnerships and website links. Parks Canada could surprise people by popping up in usual searches, such as "all-inclusive vacations." They could even find a way to have campsites come up as an option when vacationers search for rooms.

STEVE FOWLER

PRESIDENT, THE LICENSING SHOP

On the fun side, I would want to create a kid-friendly character who could be the Parks Canada official spokes-animal. Beyond the obvious merchandising benefits with kids, a promotional campaign could reward families who have their photo taken at certain destination parks with that character in tow. You could consider some kind of collectible souvenir, such as a coin or stamp, which can only be purchased on-site.

Another idea could be inviting local and regional artists to create new proprietary Parks Canada creative assets. Inviting emerging artists to participate in an annual festival of art would create another interesting merchandising opportunity, along with a travelling Parks Canada art exhibition.

Finally, Parks Canada wardens, historians and archaeologists could work with a retailer/manufacturers to inspire a seal of approval on branded tents, sleeping bags and outerwear.

ROBERT MILLER

PRESIDENT, STUDIO LICENSING

The target demo requires broadening, positioning Parks Canada as a destination for every walk of life and any occasion.

A national campaign timed three to four months prior to the season focusing on Parks Canada being for everyone and a free downloadable app to plan the travel details are essential.

[The investment could be] spent on multi-tiered retail marketing to include various forms of retailer-specific media: in-store, advertising space, QR code tagging of selected merchandise, augmented reality merchandising, etc.

Beyond a national retail partnership for apparel and accessories, an additional retail partnership for camping gear seems obvious.

Additionally, a Parks Canada e-commerce site featuring all PC merchandise could include discounts for entry with a merchandise purchase or vice versa.

IAN BARR

VICE PRESIDENT, ROCKET XL

Through social and mobile, we'd assess how Parks Canada could connect the physical and digital worlds via user engagement with each of the four screens: TV, computer, smartphone and tablet.

The end goal would be for Parks Canada to creatively bring the best experiences to connected Canadians where and when they're ready to engage. How fun would it be to teach urbanites about fly fishing by using their smartphone as a fishing rod that connects to an interactive board displaying one of our famous fishing spots? Or, have an Elk Island National Park guide give you a virtual glimpse at what it's like to see bison in their natural habitat, all streamed through various digital media.

Digital will never replace the thrill of being there in person, but it can be the lure that reels them in.

ROUNDTABLE

THE SHOPPER MARKETING REVOLUTION

BY **EMILY WEXLER**

Whether it's the advent of mobile changing the in-store experience, the influx of new competitors like Target, or simply the way online has changed the way we shop, everyone is suddenly talking about shopper marketing. Retailers and manufacturers are realizing that in order to compete, they must adapt – changing the way they understand their customers through data and analytics, or even adapting their organizational structure to meet new demands. *Strategy* assembled a panel of experts from across the shopper marketing disciplines to discuss the ever-evolving world of purchasing, and how to survive it.

MODERATORS

JOAN MCARTHUR
President, Joan McArthur Training & Consulting

MARY MADDEVER
Executive editor, *strategy*

PANELISTS

TONY CHAPMAN
Founder & CEO, Capital C

AMEY HARDING
President, LPi Communications Group

DEIRDRE HORGAN
EVP online and CMO, Indigo

ADAM HOROWITZ
Director of CPG, Precima

KEVIN LUND
VP, global retail programs, Perennial Design

MELISSA MARTIN
Director, customer & shopper marketing, Kraft Canada

MARTIN RYDLO
Director of portfolio strategy & initiatives, Campbell Company of Canada

McArthur: How is shopper marketing changing the overall marketing strategy for manufacturers?

Harding: I think one of the interesting things about shopper marketing is the collaboration required between the manufacturer and the retailer on the premise of shopper insights. Because the brand and the retailer have a certain set of objectives, they've been very operationally-oriented in the past. I think there's a change in terms of how that dynamic comes to bear and the types of initiatives.

Lund: There are a variety of products available in a multitude of channels now that never existed before. When I look at global brands like Coke or Kraft or Campbell's, you can buy that at a local gas station, at a drug store, at a convenience store, it doesn't have to be in a grocery store environment anymore. Your product needs to interact with the consumer with a unique set of pre-set conditions for their trip mission. Because the speed with which these retail channels are changing, one solution doesn't fit all anymore.

Martin: You have to have an eye to customization and to understand what [the retailer's] priorities are, but [also] who their shopper is. Understanding the shopper at a Loblaws is very different from a shopper at Sobeys or at Mac's, how do you build a program that's going to have arms and legs [and] that's suitable for all our key retail partners? There's a fundamental shift on our marketing teams. It's not enough just to have the consumer as part of our intergrated marketing communications plans, we need an understanding of who that consumer is when they translate to a shopper, and how to most effectively communicate with them throughout that shopper cycle.

Horowitz: That's where Precima and other analytics companies fit in. What we'll do with both the retailer and the manufacturer is take the actual shopper transaction

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Contact **Michael Lang** at
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data, analyze who their most important shoppers are, which typically account for about 80% of the value brought to the retailer. And from there, they can then develop programs.

Lund: The best retailers understand that their destination is a brand, and they define that brand not only in the market but to the consumer. The best CPG players understand how their best brands are aligning in that space. So the difference between Loblaws and No Frills, one is hard discounts, it has a brand definition and a promise, and Loblaws is an inspiring food shop, your brand needs to come alive in an inspiring manner to have equal weight in that environment.

Campbell's worked with retailers, buying radio ads to promote store activities around the Help Hunger Disappear program.

Rydlo: CPGs have realized that they need to start thinking like retailers as opposed to thinking like product manufacturers. What is the experience going to be in the store, and what are they going to do to help the retailer promote that type of experience? They all of a sudden have to become retail experts.

McArthur: I remember five or six years ago, Tony talking very persuasively about the power of the retailer and how there are a lot of marketers not appreciating that.

Chapman: Especially in countries like Canada and Germany where the consolidation is so great. In the States you're dealing with 44 or 45 retailers who have an impact on your bottom line and here you have arguably three or four. Now they've got the new secret weapon which is data. They've got more intelligence on how consumers think, feel and behave than marketers ever have, so you've got to [have] game-changing ideas for them to really pay attention.

Horgan: I think retail is changing in that it's becoming far more experiential. Indigo's always been an experiential retailer, and now we're extending it to the social atmosphere. You can learn so much from social engagement about the shopper, and I think you should only enter those realms of content and social if you know what you're going to do with that information.

Our publishers are hungry for that information. And as we move into other categories, they're hungry for not only the purchase info, but the colour and the emotion and the social engagement information as well.

Chapman: I think "engage" is the key word because it's the oxygen of marketing, and consumers are increasingly disengaged because it's a sea of sameness out there. That's why 50% are shopping with smartphones now, because price has become the tie-breaker. The shopper is becoming more of a hunter than a socializer. Shopping used to be a great social experience, and maybe still in Indigo, but a lot more social experiences are happening on the web. If you don't create an environment where people want to socialize and be engaged, then whoever sells the cheapest wins.

Lund: I think there's been a laziness in the last 20 years because of the fact that we were able to open doors, put products on shelves, and bigger got better.

If price is the final driver and it's requiring transparency, then I think it's requiring everyone to get off the price game, because [everyone wants] to win on price. But then when we get down to the details, the reality is you are indexed higher than your competitor. So if it's not price that I'm going to win on, then what can I win on?

Chapman: I think you have to win on value and value-added. I look at the great retailers, they're very single-mindedly focused. Dollar stores and Target are about a treasure hunt, Apple is about like-minded people…You have to be very good at one thing and differentiate, and that way you can create the experience. I think Loblaws lost its way when it got away from the passion of food, but now you've got the move towards turning home chefs into President's Choice products [with R*ecipe to Riches*], it's [changing] what people think of Loblaws.

Horgan: I think you have to find and own a unique place in the hearts and minds of consumers, that's your value proposition. Indigo/Chapters/Coles has always been a place for inspiration and information, so something to enrich your life. Now we're moving to other products and categories, and that's still the premise, how does this actually add value to your life? But you have to find that sweet spot as a retailer.

Martin: We really need to help our retailers get off of this price train. And a great example is Thanksgiving, you see turkeys deep discounted, that's the highest

demand for a turkey. So how can we create a solution that's adding value, giving them a phenomenal Thanksgiving experience and they don't mind paying that extra one or two dollars?

Chapman: If we ever thought from a user experience point of view when you walk in that store, the turkey, the gravy, the broccoli, everything that you expect to be there is there for you. Then people would be less focused on price and more focused on their gathering and you'd have an opportunity. But the trouble is it's all about a discount and people are walking around disillusioned because it's no longer about a gathering.

We're getting so good at producing that we haven't got the demand for it, so price becomes the primary tie-breaker just to keep the trucks full and the factories flowing. So I say, let's get off the price bandwagon, but I just don't see it happening.

IF YOU DON'T CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO SOCIALIZE, WHOEVER SELLS THE CHEAPEST WINS

Rydlo: We've long been promoting the idea of solutions and working with other companies to provide [them]. We've had greater lift having product in a convenient location than having that product discounted. Life is getting busier and busier, so as we take a look at the solutions we provide, it really has to be about the ease. This is where manufacturers working with retailers becomes so critical.

We worked with Metro in Quebec on a program this fall where they had three chefs do live videocasts to their Facebook audience, and they had chefs in specific stores, had them do a basic recipe and then they said, here are different ways you can spice it up with Quebec ingredients.

The pick-up from that was amazing, not only from a Facebook community standpoint but they all went into the stores afterwards and looked for the product. That is

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Chapman was a judge on the TV show *Recipe to Riches*, where home chefs (like winner Glo) sought to have their recipes turned into President's Choice products sold at Loblaws stores.

the imagination of the retailers and manufacturers working together to come up with an idea that serves up a great experience.

Chapman: I think the greatest opportunity for CPG is that retail sales are flat, and retailers, for the first time, realize that they need you guys to engage and grow their business. Where I would say the last decade they needed your money but they really didn't need you.

McArthur: That's an important change because the retailer was king…Against that backdrop, what are the implications of U.S. retailers like Target coming to Canada?

Harding: I think Target has differentiated itself, and I think the challenge for the Canadian retailers is, if they haven't been able to do that already, they better get their act together pretty quickly because Target has it figured out to a degree.

Horowitz: It's really going to come down to protecting your best customers and having the interaction with the manufacturers around the data behind that, really tailoring your strategy towards those best customers and in the long run build emotional loyalty and engagement rather than focusing on short-term deep discounting.

Chapman: Five years ago Target was date night: [shoppers could] get a dishrag for 19 cents at Walmart, but for 22 cents, they could get a Stella McCartney dishrag. But H&M has taken that strategy, a lot of people have grabbed that. I agree they're going to take business from people, but I think what we're seeing with the small format stores from Sobeys, Walmart building out, and the new Longos – they're creating a better user experience. I don't see the buzz there used to be where people would drive across the border just to go to Target.

Rydlo: Manufacturers used to step back and say, it's the retailer's job to bring shoppers into their stores. And now we're seeing retailers come up to us and say, we want to work with you on something, our Help Hunger Disappear program, for example. Last year we bought radio ads promoting some of the work happening to raise funds to alleviate hunger around what those specific stores are doing.

Lund: With Target coming, being on the defense is an inaccurate position to start from. The retailers that lost the most when Walmart showed up were the ones that changed their strategy to try to go head to head. If you do something well, keep doing it. Target's not a place to shop for anything outside of that fun, disposable fashion category, and they're really good at that. If you're changing your business strategy to try to nibble away at what Target already has, you're going to be in the same situation [as when Walmart came].

Martin: If we know [our shopper] well and we're customizing something for them, that's where we're going to win, and the retailers are looking so heavily on the manufacturers, because honestly we're paying for it. We're trying to shift away some of the money that used to be in trade to fund this insight piece.

Chapman: Assuming you're in control of placing that target, because the reality is, technology is eliminating a lot of intermediaries. I can take a picture of any product with my smartphone and find six people that will want to bid for my discretionary dollars, including someone that will deliver it to my door the next day. When you're in the Nissan dealership, there's no doubt in my mind that in two years you'll get a Honda ad for [a similar] model. It's a whole new game.

Lund: If we're smart with permission-based marketing, we need to stop over-exposing individuals to stuff they have no interest in. There is no reason a single man at the age of 20 should be getting a coupon for diapers. When you look at the literary industry or even Netflix, they understand your purchase patterns and who you are. [Fashion retailer] Lane Bryant was the first and earliest at understanding that they had a consumer that was waiting to be spoken to – plus-sized women that nobody was talking to. Individual text-message blasts to say, here's a commodity product that most retailers aren't interested in selling you, it's on sale right now at Lane Bryant. We need to be more surgical with our messages.

Rydlo: I think there's a change where manufacturers can no longer

sit back and say, "we might think about that next year." It is now to the point where we've got to think like a small company. And we've got the privilege here at Campbell's where I can go back to the kitchen and say, we need to develop something for this particular customer in two months. And we've had to do that because other retailers have been very nimble.

Chapman: Why I do see so much more lift and adapt from packaged goods companies if we're on this innovation bandwagon? Or am I just cynical because I think we're doing less and less innovation and creativity in Canada. I see these global deals being cut where advertising and the package is all being centralized and the fastest we can get it out across the world in the most uniform manner wins.

THE RETAILERS THAT LOST THE MOST WHEN WALMART SHOWED UP WERE THE ONES THAT CHANGED THEIR STRATEGY TO GO HEAD TO HEAD. IF YOU DO SOMETHING WELL, KEEP DOING IT

McArthur: Let's talk about mobile in terms of shopper marketing and what's happening there.

Chapman: Fifty per cent of consumers are now shopping with their smartphones in the U.S. I think we're going to see one of the greatest shopping revolutions of all time. And it's going to be an interesting battle because retailers are going to become showrooms like Apple is.

Horgan: We're seeing 10 to 15% of physical books move to digital right now. So our strategy is to replace that shelf space and those sales with other products. We are starting to see our general merchandise compensate for the loss of hard books.

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experience in someone's hand. I think pricing is the biggest issue with respect to mobile. But once that hurdle is reached, I see it as a very big opportunity. We've seen a dramatic increase in our mobile traffic. We've been forced to, and rightly so, deliver that mobile experience to the customer.

One of our strategies is incenting the customer to consolidate their purchases, rather than fragment them. So last April we launched Plum Rewards, which is our new loyalty program and we've got over 4.5 million members. And rewarding them with points is just table stakes, it's all about being able to understand and deliver them relevant communications that are respectful of their time.

The expectation around a loyalty program is changing, and the consumer is becoming more demanding, If I'm going to join and put another card in my wallet, there better be something meaningful to me, more than just recommendations.

While Indigo branches out into other product categories, its goal of choosing items that enrich lives remains the same.

Horowitz: Today the average Canadian participates in about nine loyalty programs, but the whole point about being in the loyalty program is not the points themselves, it's the data and the ability to target, and that is where your ability to protect the customer and grow your sales, and to stop folks from buying digitally, will [save you] in the long run.

Rydlo: Two years ago we were one of the first [CPG] companies to

THE EXPECTATION AROUND A LOYALTY PROGRAM IS CHANGING. IF I'M GOING TO PUT ANOTHER CARD IN MY WALLET, THERE BETTER BE SOMETHING MEANINGFUL TO ME

launch a cooking app – Cook with Campbell's – that you could get on your phone. Everyone knows our tomato soup and our chicken noodle, but all of a sudden those specialty ones like tomato with basil, that's where we saw the lift.

But we're eagerly awaiting a retailer to bring on board the technology that will allow the scanning of coupons via smartphones, and the smartphone becoming wallets themselves. When that happens, mobile will really skyrocket because all of a sudden you'll be able to close the cycle. I think it's [up to] us to work with retailers to encourage them in terms of making sure that that technology continues to keep up.

Horgan: Would manufacturers be interested in helping, co-investing in the digital upgrade of these stores of the future so there are more direct means of communicating with customers? Because margins in retail are extremely thin and consumers are demanding a richer, more experiential environment. Who should bear the cost?

Rydlo: I'm sure the discussion happened 50, 60 years ago around flyers. I think we're going to see a similar thing with mobile, it's dependent on the collaboration of the two groups.

Maddever: What are the best, most innovative examples from around the world of a retailer or manufacturer doing something that really engages shoppers?

Chapman: I like the new Loblaws store at Maple Leaf Gardens. I love the smaller footprints. I think people are getting tired of shopping at 125,000 sq. ft. stores. People are getting better at smart, smaller formats.

Horgan: I think on the manufacturer side, the most interesting trend I'm seeing is mass-customization. On the high-end it's Burberry, you can actually create your own trench coat. And then on a more accessible level, Nike is doing tremendous things with respect to customizing your own footwear.

On the retail side, I don't think retailers have yet caught up to what can be the store of the future. A bunch of screens and advertising in the store is not [it]. It needs to be a seamless, fully integrated way of addressing consumers' needs, and I don't think anyone has really done a tremendous job of it.

We're aspiring to create what will be a prototype for a much more digitally advanced, interactive and experiential retail experience, which will launch at the end of this year.

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A BIG DECADE FOR MINI

As the car co celebrates its 10th anniversary in Canada, *strategy* reflects on the brand building that got it here

BY **MELINDA MATTOS**

Above and opposite page: Mini Canada has a penchant for mounting actual cars to sides of buildings to drive its advertising.

Before there was a single Mini on the road in Canada, there was one in Taxi's boardroom. The agency had to remove the front window just to get it in there. Lance Martin, ECD of Taxi 2 – who was on the pitch and has been working on the account ever since – remembers the stir it caused.

"That was the first time anyone could see a redesigned Mini in Canada so we had a lot of people coming in off the street saying, 'Is it okay if I just go and look at that Mini?'"

When it finally launched on March 22, 2002, it was impossible not to look at the Mini. In addition to typical ad opps such as transit and print, the agency pulled stunts nobody had seen before, like hanging a full-sized Mini from the outside of a building in Toronto, trailed by tire tracks in the shape of a Union Jack.

"That stopped people in the street," says Matt Kelly, ad strategy expert and managing director, Level5 Strategic Brand Advisors, when asked for his thoughts on the unusual OOH execution. "As a new entrant, they needed to capture people's attention and their hearts and minds, and I think they did that."

"That [stunt] sort of set the tone as a little gutsy, mischievous, shit-disturber brand," agrees Martin.

What followed was a decade's worth of made-you-look advertising that has taken gold at Cannes, ADCC, the One Show, the Clios and the Obies, and been picked up by Mini brand teams internationally.

Mini Canada celebrates its 10th birthday this month, and the milestone comes hot on the heels of another one. According to Adam Shaver, director, Mini Canada, last year was the first time the niche brand sold over 5,000 units in Canada. With 5,155 cars sold, it was a 15% increase over 2010.

So, how has Mini kept things fresh, gutsy and shit-disturbing throughout the decade? And what's next as Mini expands on its core model with new offerings like the two-seat Coupe (launched in late 2011), the soft-topped Roadster (launched in February) and last year's SUV crossover Countryman? *Strategy* takes a look back, and a look ahead.

SMALL TEAM, GIANT IDEAS

"Back in the early days it was a guerrilla team," Martin says. Mini Canada had a staff of two – national manager Rob Van Shaik and special projects manager Michel Matte – to launch the brand in the Great White North.

"[We'd] sit around the boardroom, not just trying to come up with advertising solutions, but also product solutions – deciding what kind of cars to launch, what colours and even how many to order," Martin says. "Taxi, in a way, acted as a branch of their marketing department instead of just their creative department."

While Mini Canada has grown from a two-man operation to a team of nine, Shaver says familiar faces remain on both the brand team and the agency side.

"That's one of our strengths and one of the reasons we've been able to maintain our position in the market over the past 10 years," he says. Shaver took his own leadership role at Mini in mid-2011 but has been with BMW since 2002, while Van Shaik and Matte have moved on from Mini but remain part of BMW Group Canada.

IT'S NOT CUTE, IT'S MANLY

Standing out from the crowd was never going to be a challenge for Mini. With its compact body, wide-eyed headlights and smiling grill, it simply doesn't look like other cars. And, of course, who could forget its U.K. pedigree as an iconic vehicle of the 1960s? Shortly before the new model launched, a panel of automotive experts voted Mini the second most influential car of the 20th century.

But would the Mini be manly enough for modern guys?

"[A] big challenge was making sure that the Mini brand came across in a masculine way and became perceived as a male vehicle – cool, cheeky, exciting – as opposed to cute and lovable," Shaver says, suggesting that while women will buy a car they perceive as masculine, men won't buy a car they perceive as feminine.

So, the Mini was only released as a manual-transmission model at first, Shaver says, while the creative also went a long way to reach men. Timer boards installed above men's room urinals in 2007 invited guys to compare their speed with that of the Mini, with ad copy chiding, "You're a little slow out of the gate, aren't you?"

THE MINI BIG-BANG THEORY

As a niche brand, it's been critical for Mini to make a big splash without spending too much. "We don't have a huge budget, so we try to get more attention by doing things that haven't been done before," Martin says.

One of his favourite executions was "Let there be Xenon" in 2007. To promote the new model and its more powerful bi-Xenon headlights, Taxi once again mounted a car to the side of a building, adding a new twist. Its headlights were pointed toward the sky, with 2,500-watt lights shooting up to the lower levels of the stratosphere. The light show was so eye-catching that the agency eventually had to take it down because it was distracting pilots.

Since often the budget is limited to one piece, Martin says they try to come up with stunts so unexpected that they generate buzz in blogs and international magazines. In 2003, Mini capitalized on the Toronto Auto Show by placing a car in a cage in the parking lot across the street, with a sign that read "Please do not feed, tease, or annoy the Mini" – a stunt that was later recreated in B.C., the U.S. and parts of Europe.

Sometimes the stunts were considerably cheaper, like "Hands Up," which saw a new convertible Mini driven around Toronto with fake arms emerging from the driver's side, simulating the way people instinctively put their arms up while riding a rollercoaster.

"We put that whole stunt together for about $67," says Martin, who built the prototype in his garage. The idea was shown off at a global brand summit and ended up being used in seven countries. "I've got all this footage of people in Tokyo and different parts of the world doing the stunt we did here in Toronto," he says.

ROOTING FOR THE UNDERDOG

Although Mini is a BMW brand, it's positioned itself as the market's scrappy underdog. When it first launched, Volkswagen was running its "Drivers wanted" campaign, so Mini bought a billboard next to VW's that read "Real drivers wanted." It took a swipe at another premium brand with its "Parks faster than a Ferrari" ads that same year.

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Fighting for the little guy, Mini launched its police-spotting billboards in 2003.

But what generated the most talk value was probably its 2003 "Cops hide here" campaign, which saw billboards placed beside notorious speed traps with giant arrows pointing to police hiding spots.

"At the time, the radio stations went crazy with it – Mini fighting for the little guy, trying to bust the things that are slowing it down," Martin says. "People in Canada see Mini as a little car looking to have some fun and get into trouble."

EMBRACING THE F-WORD: FUN

"Mini is a brand that's fun, irreverent and bold, and that brand strategy is echoed in all of its communication touchpoints," says Kelly. His agency, Level5, compares brands by plotting them on a map of different attributes, and as far as Kelly is concerned, Mini falls squarely in the fun zone, sharing many characteristics with consumer electronics favourite Apple.

"Apple is a brand that's entertaining, fun, desirable and interesting, and it fires on all the right emotions in terms of love and devotion, but it's in this fun zone," he says.

The car brand's focus on customization and unique add-ons – from paint colours and racing stripes to branded luggage that fits perfectly in the trunk – also falls in line with Apple's individualistic messaging, Kelly says. Not to mention the smartphone integration system built into the front display of newer models, with accompanying Mini Connected App, which gives easy access to social media.

"People often personify themselves by the car they drive, just like they personify themselves by the smartphone they carry," he says. "I think the successful people within the automotive category have figured out that it's this wonderful combination of rational and emotional, with emotional probably trumping rational."

For a pocket-sized performance vehicle, fun is an apt descriptor, and Mini's advertising has always driven this message home. A 2004 magazine ad featured a paper model of a Mini that could be folded and glued together to become a 3D replica. Another magazine execution in 2007 turned a business reply card into a faux ramp, so it looked like the Mini in the print ad would drive right off the page and into the air.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Since the redesigned Mini's launch in 2002, the small car market has exploded, with competitors ranging from the next-generation Smart Fortwo to Toyota's micro-subcompact Scion iQ.

"The world is becoming ever more mini," Shaver says, quoting a colleague. But this is both a blessing and a curse for the brand.

"People are moving towards smaller cars, but a lot of the brands introducing those smaller cars are also looking at the way that Mini marketed [itself] and appear to be trying to follow a very similar route," he says. "As a result, it becomes increasingly difficult to get our voice out there."

Maintaining a consistent tone – in other words, staying true to the brand's spunky, shit-disturber image – is one way Shaver thinks Mini will maintain its growth despite the increased competition. But it's going to be a delicate balance, as Mini expands its offerings to attract new buyers.

When the five-door, SUV-style Mini Countryman launched last year, it presented a way to target buyers who'd grown out of their Minis with the arrival of a baby or dog, as well as folks who'd never considered buying one before. It also marked the first time Mini Canada strongly targeted families, partnering with parenting site YummyMummyClub.ca to showcase the SUV's features in a real-life family setting.

But as the *Toronto Star* asked at the time, "How much larger can a Mini get before it stops being a Mini?" And how will such additions affect the brand's identity?

"As soon as you stray from the core of your brand into other things, you risk diluting that core," says brand advisor Kelly. "I think it's very important, as they try to reach new markets or follow their users as they get older, [not to] stray from the core DNA. Maybe you just launch a new brand to do that instead."

Although it's a big leap from urinal advertising to YummyMummyClub.ca, Shaver says Mini's historically spunky voice won't be toned down too much.

"For us now," says Martin, "it's going to be telling a slightly different story, but maintaining the Mini brand and making sure it still feels like the Mini family."

While some ads for the Countryman have referenced family reunions or joked that "Now you don't have to sell the kids," others used lines like "Add inches to your cockpit" and "Bigger, for your pleasure." So while Mini may be growing up, it certainly isn't maturing.

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Mastering Branded Content & Integration

How Brands can create deeper connections with consumers

Wouldn't it be great if consumers actually sought out your ads? Or, at the very least, didn't see them as an annoying intrusion? Smart marketers are increasingly turning to branded content and integration strategies to augment more traditional advertising, and connect with consumers in an entirely different context.

Branded content and integration can take many forms – from seamless brand integrations on an existing TV show, like when Claire Dunphy went shopping at Target on Modern Family, to tongue-in-cheek Speed Stick shout-outs by Zach Galifianakis on Funny or Die's hugely popular online segment Between Two Ferns. In some cases, brands are even creating the content themselves, such as Hallmark or Disney's TV channels or Anthropologie's artistic online endeavour called The Anthropologist.

A study by CNBC and UK-based consultancy Continental Research confirmed what many in the industry have long-suspected: strategic branded content can be incredibly effective. In fact, the research revealed that branded content significantly boosts brand recall, engagement and awareness when done well.

What's more, the study indicated that viewers have an overwhelmingly positive attitude about branded content. Consumers who see brands associated with engaging content are more likely to become brand advocates. A staggering 82% of the study's participants said that if they enjoy a show,

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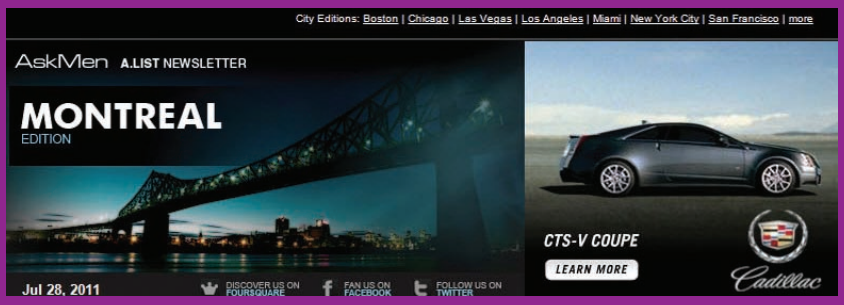
Source: comScore, Inc., Total Canada, home and work, December 2011

they tend to feel more positive about a brand that sponsors it. That's good news for advertisers looking for new ways to resonate with increasingly fickle and cynical audiences.

Of course, all the potential benefits of branded content and integration become irrelevant if the strategies are poorly executed. Executions have to be authentic, transparent and seamless. The last thing consumers want is an infomercial jammed into their favourite programming. And they're certainly not going to seek out branded content online if it doesn't offer them anything of value.

The world of branded content and integrations is complex, and requires marketers to work with a variety of partners in order to execute well. Luckily, there are plenty of skilled Canadian media companies and agencies that can help you navigate this intricate and incredibly worthwhile space.



TC Media

TC Media helps advertisers develop and manage relevant branded content cost-effectively across multiple channels. It achieves this by leveraging its own properties, third-party partners as well as executions in the social media space. TC Media serves as a content architect, crafting content that resonates with consumers by leveraging its extensive insights and data.

TC Media sparks brand conversations across multiple channels by marrying proven marketing tactics with leading technology to quickly mobilize consumers to action. This winning combination ensures that brands can cut through the clutter of ever-multiplying channels and connect with consumers in new and powerful ways.

The company's unrivalled commitment to technological platforms and expertise in managing and distributing content anywhere provides it with a one-of-a-kind capability for orchestrating connections between consumers and brands. TC Media knows how to optimize the unique qualities of each channel. It activates custom-tailored marketing programs for national and local advertisers by combining expertise, creativity, relevant content, consumer insights, technology and engaged audiences on multiple platforms and channels.

TC Media is a division of the recently rebranded marketing activation company, TC Transcontinental. In the new "TC", the "t" stands for technology, while the "c" represents community. The company has modernized its image to better reflect what it has become: a leader in the new marketing communications economy.

ADDING VALUE

Today's consumers are clearly starved for time. That means marketers who want their attention need to offer something in return. That's part of the reason we've seen a growing focus on branded content in Canada over the past several years. "Advertisers need to cut through the clutter of ever-multiplying channels and choices to engage consumers and build lasting relationships," says Natalie Larivière, president of Montreal-based TC Media. "Branded storytelling helps boost brand awareness, and has greater impact when consumers are establishing brand preference and making purchase decisions.

TC Media's integrated marketing solutions division 360° Solutions recently crafted a branded content campaign for a pharmacy chain that provided health tips for consumers in local newspapers. The executions offered valuable content that was of interest to readers, and it reinforced the client's position as an expert on health-related issues. "Branded content can show product attributes in a way that a straight piece of advertising cannot," says Reneault Poliquin, VP of 360° Solutions.

Branded content and integration can also be a great way to reach consumers who aren't responding to traditional forms of advertising for whatever reason. "You can get at those 90% who aren't clicking on your ads," says Brad Cressman, head of content at Toronto-based AOL Canada. "It lets brands interact with audiences in a different way."

It can also help quench the constant thirst for content that our perpetually plugged in society has begun to demonstrate. "Audiences are engaged with content 24/7. Advertisers have to be part of those conversations," says Anthony Hello, director of content at Toronto-based MediaCom Canada. It's important to note that this constant thirst doesn't mean consumers are lowering their standards simply for the sake of consuming content. "Consumers have a lot more control and choice. You want to create content they're interested in," says Matt di Paola, MediaCom's chief strategy and innovation officer.

An easy way to lure consumers into your content is by leveraging their favourite TV personalities. "Take a host and have them do an endorsement," advises Stephanie Blondal, director of Brand Partnerships at Toronto-based Shaw Media. Microsoft did just that during the last back-to-school season in an incredibly well-received series of branded segments built around popular hosts such as HGTV's Bryan Baeumler, Paul Lafrance and Top Chef Canada Season 1 winner Dale MacKay. "We did three different scripts with the three different hosts, and they were all on-brand," says Blondal. For instance, Baeumler's segment featured him in an outdoor setting demonstrating how Microsoft products help him manage his business.

The hosts each took an active part in developing their segments to achieve something that felt authentic, not forced. "The talent is encouraged to be part of the scripting process to capture their authenticity," says Blondal. "The more authentic the content feels, the more likely audiences are to respond positively.

Gaye McDonald, Director of Marketing, CBC Revenue Group, agrees. "A great thing you can do if you're working with a broadcast partner is utilize their talent," she says. CBC recently created a series of vignettes for the Heart & Stroke Foundation featuring Dragon's Den maven Arlene Dickinson and Republic of Doyle star Allan Hawco talking about how heart disease has affected them. CBC dialed up the integration even further by including Heart & Stroke e-tools into its national healthy-Canada initiative, Live Right Now, and by featuring discussions about heart disease on its popular daytime talk show 'Steven and Chris,' even inviting audience members to make donations.

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Totem is now part of TC Media, a North American leader in marketing solutions.

Branded content doesn't have to live on TV or major print publications to reach large audiences. Toronto-based agency Cue Digital Media has created branded online videos for clients like Forzani Group and NAPA Auto Parts that have achieved well over one million views per campaign. "You can reach critical mass GRP numbers if you do it correctly," says David U.K., Cue's CEO.

ACHIEVING HOLISTIC STORYTELLING

A big part of executing branded content and integration well is organically inserting a brand into conversations consumers care about. "There are a lot of content organizations popping up all over the place, but not everybody has that storytelling ability," says Cathrin Bradbury, award-winning journalist and executive director of Toronto-based Star Content Studios. "You have to have an idea, a story that's going to excite and draw people in."

Star Content Studios is the Toronto Star's new branded content division headed up by Bradbury and former Globe and Mail editor-in-chief Edward Greenspon. They're focused on finding the story first, and then weaving in the most appropriate brands in where it makes sense. "Our preferred mode is to be proactive. To start with the idea, and approach advertisers saying 'what about this?'" says Bradbury.

Starting with the story first is a good way to make sure the content will attract an audience. "Authentic storytelling is a great goal for brands to have," says Cressman. Of course, sometimes brands have their own stories that can be compelling, too. Cressman points to a great example in L'Oreal's latest campaign supporting the launch of Garnier's BB Cream that includes features such as sponsored blog posts with custom galleries that revolve around relevant beauty topics. "This approach to branded content resonates with users because it is not a manufactured story about a product, it's just great content around topics people care about."

Branded content executions can fall apart if brands start wading into unnatural territory for the sake of grasping onto trends. "You can't fit a square peg into a round hole," U.K. points out. Just because consumers are abuzz about Victoria Beckham's killer style or Lady Gaga's latest outrageous get-up doesn't mean your brand needs to be a part of that particular conversation.

However, sometimes it does make sense for a brand to join the discussion about which celebrity wore what. MediaCom injected its client Winners into the celebrity fashion coverage on Entertainment Tonight Canada via a customized segment called Find Fabulous for Less, which recapped the hottest celebrity looks and showed viewers how to recreate them with clothes available at Winners. The segment worked because it was a natural fit for Entertainment Tonight Canada, and it offered viewers something of value that was contextually relevant. "It's a privilege for advertisers to be associated with content, so they have to make sure they're adding value," says Hello.

It's a privilege that can sometimes be incredibly competitive to attain. When Shaw announced production on Top Chef Canada the network received over 100 requests from advertisers who wanted to integrate their brands into the popular Food Network Canada show. "There were so many we had to say no to," Blondal recalls. "The brands have to fit, they have to work with the narrative of the show. Loblaws, Sponge Towels and GE Mabe from Season 1 are perfect examples."

Our lineup of iconic Canadian programs means we can create a tailor-made opportunity for your brand to share our audiences. And with CBC, you're partnering with one of Canada's most influential brands.

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CBC

This discerning approach has resulted in some award-winning integrations for Shaw Media and its clients. For instance, one episode of Top Chef Canada Season 1 sponsored by restaurant chain Milestones featured the chefs competing to make the best appetizer, entrée and dessert to serve to Milestones customers. The winning dishes from each of the three categories were available on the Milestones menu the day after the episode aired, extending the integration into something tactical. "It's a great example of the long tail of product placement," says Blondal.

When brand integrations are this holistic, viewers actually embrace them. McDonald points to a hugely successful integration CBC did for the Ford Fiesta with its hit show Being Erica. The show's writers actually wove the car into the storyline by having one of the characters buy it. CBC augmented the integration with mini-webisodes featuring the actress that ran online, as well as during commercial breaks when Being Erica aired. "It was very holistic," McDonald says, adding that it had the added benefit of keeping viewers' attention during commercial breaks by leveraging the show's talent beyond the show itself.

You don't necessarily need celebrities to get people's attention. In some cases, it makes perfect sense for someone from the brand to serve as the storytelling vehicle. 360° Solutions recently helped a financial institution engage readers with a series of articles about important financial issues. The articles ran in multiple local papers, and were signed by corresponding local branch managers. "Creating special sections really resonates well with readers," says Poliquin.

MediaCom Canada

MediaCom Canada's Beyond Advertising department specializes in developing game-changing ways for brands to connect with their target audiences through content. The agency has over ten years of experience in branded content and integration, translating into competencies that are unrivalled by any other company. Beyond Advertising's content activation and distribution strategies drive consumer engagement levels that can't be achieved through traditional advertising alone.

Consumers don't think in media channels, and neither does MediaCom. This unique approach ensures that every communications strategy the agency builds is tailored to fit each client's precise needs. MediaCom's Beyond Advertising department lives within the agency's Strategy & Innovation group, which brings a real rigor to how it tackles each assignment. MediaCom future-proofs its clients businesses by delivering a deep understanding of consumer behaviour and needs, rather than simply chasing the latest hype.

Everything MediaCom does revolves around measurement, accountability and driving growth for its clients. It works closely with clients to define specific goals at the outset, ensuring that every tactic along the way is aligned with achieving the desired results. MediaCom Canada has created growth driving content and integration executions for major brands such as H+M, Maytag, Canadian Tire and Winners.

DISTRIBUTION MATTERS

While integrations into popular TV shows or branded content placed in mainstream newspapers typically come with built-in audiences, other executions may require clever strategies to make sure they connect with the intended target. "If content is king, then distribution is queen," says U.K.. Cue deploys a variety of tactics to ensure a large viewing audience for each of its executions. "We guarantee online video views," says U.K.. Cue achieves this through seeding on sites that are popular with the intended target. "Intellectual property is not important. The content should live everywhere your audience is. It's very important to be site agnostic," he says.

Cressman says AOL is also great at making sure its content connects with the right eyeballs. "Our platform on The Huffington Post was built right from the ground up to share. It allows content to go more places than any other platform," says Cressman. "It really started as a conversation site. Sharing and commenting can really help brands."

360° Solutions understands the importance of getting people talking about your brand. That's why it goes beyond TC Media properties if it makes sense for the brand. For instance, it recently created a branded lifestyle section on popular male site AskMen.com for the Cadillac Coupe, which wanted to change its perception among urban,

Cue Digital Media

Cue Digital Media is a leader in branded entertainment, with production and distribution capabilities that guarantee results. Cue's overarching philosophy when it comes to helping brands connect with consumers through branded entertainment is "content is king, distribution is queen." Cue develops, produces, syndicates and distributes original, award-winning digital branded video content for advertisers.

In addition, Cue exclusively represents established high-profile online entertainment properties such as Heavy, College Humor, FunnyorDie.com, WB, TMZ and UFC.com, reaching 82% of Canadians online. Cue is #1 when it comes to delivering males 18-49 in Canada. It also has extensive in-game advertising capabilities with its exclusive Double Fusion partnership representing Playstation® 3 in-game advertising, as well as publishers CheatCodeCentral.com and Kongregate.com. Exclusive partnerships such as these enable Cue to truly take branded entertainment and integrations to the next level.

Cue has made "The List," as one of the hottest digital companies and recently named one of Canada's Most Promising New Digital Companies at the Digi Awards.

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Star Content Studios

Star Content Studios has recruited some of Canada's top editorial talent to create unique storytelling opportunities for advertisers. With former Globe & Mail editor-in-chief Edward Greenspon and award-winning journalist Cathrin Bradbury at the helm, this newly created division offers advertisers a truly distinctive approach to bringing their brand stories to life in a compelling manner. Also joining the team is Dick Snyder, a former Globe editor who led the creative and strategic work at Totem (formerly Redwood), one of North America's largest custom communications companies.

Along with the unrivalled skill sets of its staff, Star Content Studios also offers advertisers access to Torstar's rich archives to help create powerful content in a cost-effective way. The studio takes a holistic approach to creating branded content and integration strategies, beginning with an original story that can seamlessly weave brands into it in a natural, non-invasive style.

Star Content Studios can craft a variety of different content strategies, from sponsored print articles to branded videos online. With the resources of Torstar behind it, the studio can ensure that whatever content it creates will be supported by the distribution it needs to connect with the intended audience.

The Toronto Star has a weekly reach in print and online of over 3 million readers and reaches the affluent, well-educated target demographic that advertisers covet.

high-income French Quebec men 25-40. The section featured relevant articles and videos, and wound up attracting 40,000 unique visitors. "We do not hesitate to use partners. In some instances, we're also using TV and radio partners," says Poliquin. "The client is driving the needs. At the end of the day, what matters is our client's success."

360° is also able to leverage TC Media's database of six million names and addresses to send branded content directly to targeted demographics via emails and mail-outs. 360° can target both large mass audiences with its database, as well as niche demos. For instance, it could potentially build a list of people with household incomes above $80,000 who aren't great at saving. "It's a unique selling point for us," says Poliquin of TC's extensive database.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING

While branded content and integration can be a great way to connect with consumers, it isn't intended to replace traditional advertising altogether. "A 30-second brand spot does the heavy lifting for the brand," says Blondal. "A product integration offers another layer and a unique opportunity for consumers to see the product in a different context."

In an increasingly fragmented media environment, the more channels advertisers can leverage, the better. "Smart advertisers know that one medium is no longer enough," says Bradbury. "I think branded content is a complement to other forms of advertising, and even a complement to journalism."

While Cue does extensive seeding, U.K. emphasizes that brands need to support their content initiatives, too. "You need to budget for media support," he says. That could take the form of branded video players to display more marketing-focused messaging such as calls to action surrounding the more subtle branded content, or banner, TV or print ads to drive people to your content. McDonald agrees. "Commercials can be a great way to drive people to the branded content," she says, adding that the customized Ford Fiesta spots helped maximize the car's Being Erica integration.

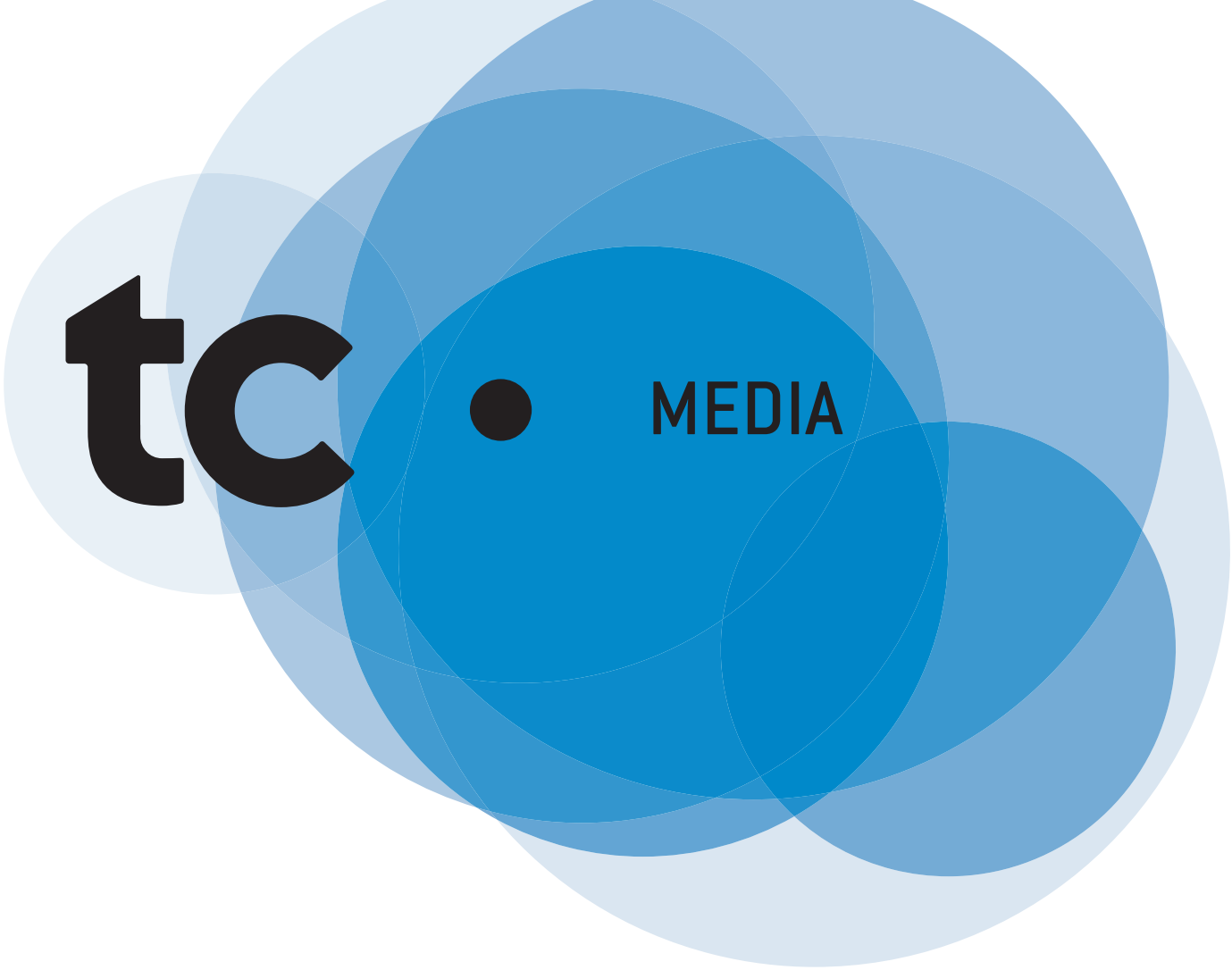
The same principle applies to online. Cressman points out that L'Oreal is supplementing its current branded content initiative on the Huffington Post with display advertising that leverages AOL's unique Devil ad platform, which enables users to interact with the ad unit. This let L'Oreal highlight product attributes that it couldn't naturally work into its sponsored blogs and photo galleries.

AOL

AOL gets your brands noticed online by combining advertising and content to engage consumers, build awareness and drive sales. The majority of users' time online is spent with content, and AOL's premium content, innovative ad products, and expertise can help marketers weave their brands into compelling content. AOL and The Huffington Post have a rich understanding of what makes consumers want to share content in industry-specific verticals such as auto, lifestyle, entertainment, finance and technology.

The Huffington Post was built from the ground up to facilitate sharing, enabling content to go more places than any other platform. It offers advertisers a safe environment to insert their brands into conversations that are already happening. AOL's wide array of verticals and user groups allow advertisers to build relevant branded content and integration strategies for their specific target audiences.

AOL works with advertisers to build customized content strategies that are relevant to their brands, from sponsored blog posts and galleries to branded videos. AOL augments content strategies with its groundbreaking Devil and premium ad units to ensure maximum impact. With more than 20 available apps and modules, including video, high-res image galleries and social integration, it's easy to customize Devil ads to achieve specific brand goals.



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Shaw Media

Shaw Media has spent years working with Canada's top television producers to craft entertaining, relevant, organic brand integrations for Canadian advertisers. This experience has led to the development of a business model that drives quality and results for brand partners. With access to an integration landscape of programs in various genres appealing to a number of demographics; Shaw Media ensures advertisers can connect with the audiences that matter to them most.

The Shaw Media Brand Partnership model is focused on creating the right experience for partner brands, the programs, the hosts and, most importantly, the audience. It is a model within which the client, the agency and Shaw Media collaborate to achieve a brand's business objectives, while maintaining the viewer's positive relationship with content. The partnership solutions landscape spans all manner of dramatic, reality, instructional, educational and news content found throughout Shaw Media's broadcast, online and mobile assets.

Shaw Media operates Global Television and 18 of the country's most popular specialty channels, including HGTV Canada, Mystery TV, National Geographic Channel, Showcase, History Television, Food Network Canada and TVtropolis, in addition to more than 20 online properties. Shaw Media is continually working to deliver new, creative and innovative ways for brands to connect with consumers wherever they are.

In some cases, supporting ads aim to bolster a brand's connection to a show.

For instance, Motrin reinforced its clever integration into Wipeout Canada through traditional advertising, sponsorship of the casting promotion, retail events, in-store dominations, contesting and placements on the Wipeout Canada website and Facebook fan page. "I think it shows a lot of gumption and imagination on the part of Motrin," says Blondal.

When MediaCom crafted a sponsorship activation for H+M Canada and the MuchMusic Video Awards, it made sure to complement its branded content components with traditional executions such as a microsite and broadcast ads. This ensured H+M resonated with its target on multiple levels. "A lot of the times branded content gives advertisers a more informal voice," says Hello.

GETTING IT RIGHT

"The devil is in the details with branded content. It is a precise exercise," says Hello. That means advertisers have a lot to consider when they foray into this complex realm. Poorly executed attempts at branded content and integration are not only a waste of time and money, but also have the potential to do more harm than good.

McDonald points to the infamous "Bride Has Massive Hair Wig Out" YouTube video as an example of something that went viral, but didn't do any favours for the brand behind it. When consumers found out it wasn't authentic, they became more cynical than ever. "You have to create branded content with the focus on doing the right thing for your brand, not just creating something to go viral," says McDonald.

The biggest problem with the Wig Out video was that it presented itself as something it wasn't. "Branded content works with absolute transparency. No one's trying to trick anyone," says Bradbury. "What you really want to do is tell stories journalistically, but clearly branded."

Bradbury points to a Fisher Price blog, found at fisherpriceplay.ca/moms, as an example of branded content done well. The toy company enlisted a real-life mom to blog about its toys, and empowered her to be honest – even if that meant negative comments about some of its products. "Nobody is pretending Fisher Price isn't paying for it, but since she

CBC Revenue Group

CBC is the leading media partner for integrated innovation in Canada. It works closely with advertisers to weave brands seamlessly into some of the most popular programming in Canada. CBC currently airs seven of the top 10 Canadian programs, with two of the top three programs belonging to CBC.

CBC's integration opportunities extend into scripted and non-scripted programming, as well as its increasingly popular online properties such as cbc.ca, which attracts nearly 140 million page views each month. CBC works with its production partners on an ongoing basis to identify integration opportunities that can showcase brands in a unique light.

CBC has won a wealth of awards for its integration strategies, including seven 2010 Media Innovation Awards and three 2010 Sponsorship Marketing Awards. CBC was also declared the 2010 Media Collaborator of the Year, and was recently named the sixth most influential brand in Canada in the annual Ipsos Reid Influence Index.

Source for Audience Information:
TV: BBM Canada, Prime Time (Mon-Sun 7pm-11pm), Total Canada, 2+, entertainment programs only (excluding news and sports), three episodes or more, Sept 12 2011 to Feb 5 2012 (CBC Programs Audiences begin with the premiere episode of each series)
Online: ComScore, Monthly Average 2011

has free reign to say whatever she thinks, people trust it," says Bradbury. "They go to it because it's honest."

Cressman agrees that participating in honest discussions surrounding a brand is key – even though it requires advertisers to be a bit more courageous. "Marketers need to be willing to let go of their content," he says. "These conversations are happening anyways. Manufacturing topics is always dangerous. It's important to speak about what your audience is already talking about."

At the same time, there's a delicate balance to keep in mind. After all, you don't want to pile onto a topic that's already been covered to death. "When everyone's running in one direction, stop and look behind you," advises Bradbury. "You want to be original, timely and not doing the same thing everyone else is."

One of the best things a marketer can do when it comes to producing great branded content is enlisting help from a seasoned partner. "Today, marketers' organizations are not structured to effectively manage all the customer touch points," says Larivière. "It can be costly to do it in-house as content management across the various touch points requires a full suite of capabilities necessary to publish and respond to content with digital technology know-how, content and consumer interest expertise as well as transactional knowledge."

Outside partners can also help marketers make sure the content they're producing is right for the chosen medium. "When you're producing online content, you need to think like an online producer. Don't make a TV commercial for online," says U.K.. "The branding can be subtle and still get the message across."

Subtle, of course, is the operative word. "Ten years ago, clients expected you to zoom in on their logos," says Blondal. "Viewers are so sophisticated now they would just roll their eyes at something like that."

"BRANDED CONTENT IS THE FUTURE"

U.K. says Canada is still way behind other markets when it comes to branded content. He points out that the large majority of advertising on hugely popular US-based sites like College Humor and Funny or Die consists of branded content. "The US market is way ahead of us," he says. "Branded content is the future in Canada." U.K. isn't alone in this line of thinking. "Branded content will strengthen the relationships between consumers and manufacturers," says Poliquin.

As more marketers embrace branded content and integration, the parameters will continue to evolve. Di Paola points to an execution General Mills ran in the States that enabled kids to play a game via a QR code on the cereal box itself. "That's a new definition of content," he says.

More traditional media partners are also focused on expanding this burgeoning field. "CBC is taking this very seriously," says McDonald. "We will be developing branded content strategies as we develop shows." Blondal echoes McDonald's sentiments, emphasizing that Shaw Media is also dedicated to creating more and more opportunities for marketers. "Our Content, Sales, Marketing and Research groups have become truly collaborative resulting in success stories for advertisers," she says.

Marketers would be wise to start exploring branded content and integration opportunities now if they haven't already. "It's important to get really good at branded content now," says Bradbury. After all, as Hello deftly surmises, "This is where marketing communications is going." •

IF CONTENT IS KING AND DISTRIBUTION IS QUEEN, DON'T BE THE JOKER.

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There's a saying "Build it and they will come". That's not necessarily true with online video. Smart marketers are increasingly turning to branded content and integration strategies to significantly boost brand recall, engagement and awareness. We don't like to boast (ok we do) Cue Digital Media delivered over 1 Million video views for each webisode series we produced and distributed last year and we are still counting.

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Design for the human race

BY **BENNETT KLEIN**

There was a time when designers designed things and marketers marketed things. Today, design is a competency we all need to embrace.

Design is now how we approach problem solving, manage complexity, reduce risk and deliver valuable experiences. Design is how we plan the structure of our businesses and the construction of dynamic human networks we call organizations. It's how organizations create brand systems and platforms that deliver meaningful interactions. Service design is evolving to overtake object design.

Just as design was packed into a little box, so was experience. Experiential marketing companies focused on live events, where experiences were big, bold and meant to sell something. Experience is now framed as interactions with a brand, through multiple life cycles, that form brand perceptions.

Our industry has recently realized that we're all designers of experiences; that brands need broad and meaningful platforms and rich, diverse systems of value delivery. It's that collection of evolving experiences that keep a brand relevant and useful.

One of the founding fathers of user experience design is Don Norman, a psychologist who wrote the seminal book *The Design of Everyday Things*. He demanded that designers understand how things are actually used, and now refers to his discipline as "human centred design."

BENNETT KLEIN Bennett is a creative planner at Toronto-based Capital C.

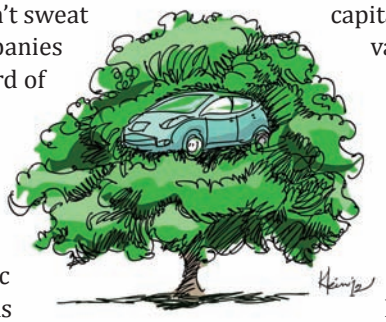
As the influence of the user experience design world bubbles up to the mar-com universe, here are four ways the principles of user experience can be applied.

1. Iterative/collaborative design

After design and user research development, many of the best design thinkers prototype ideas, testing them in the real world, not just focus groups. They then iterate improvements based on feedback which often challenges original assumptions. Iterative design also enables lead users, influencers, community leaders and true believers to offer input, enabling critical buy-in and ownership by key constituents.

2. Systems thinking

There was a time consumers didn't care where something was made, what it was made of and where it went when it died. They didn't sweat things like parent companies or who was on the board of directors.



Now, we need to think about how a product fits into a user's life and delivers value beyond its specific domain. The Datsun was simply a car; the Nissan Leaf is an electric mobility platform, requiring a charging system that has an impact on homes, communities, municipalities and government policy. Leaf users want to understand what happens to the battery after its lifespan, and Nissan is innovating as you read this, looking at cradle to cradle solutions (an old car battery becomes a new backup power source), compared to the old cradle to grave default (landfill).

The original Xbox was a game console. Today it's a digital lifestyle system, with Xbox Live and Kinect extending the platform globally, from gaming to arts, sports and education.

Systems thinking and design thinking will require us to understand more complex human and technological interactions and then design solutions, stories and experiences within it.

3. Useful interactions

Interactions are the connections that result in an experience, and the goal is to deliver value. This may be an app that provides weather or maps, or, like Nike+ GPS, offers high utility while keeping the brand integrated within the fabric of the user's life.

Interaction designers are changing the way we consume, exploring opportunities for meaningful connections at every interaction point.

4. Social as a business model

Society is now connected in a system of trust and reciprocity. Cultural capital is slowly built and value is earned through the exchange of meaningful experiences within communities of interest. These tribes, as they have done for a millennium, can spot an outsider in seconds. Brands can quickly become pariahs if they lack critical socio-cultural skills.

As experience designers, we need to look at social as a business solution, versus a media campaign or a technology play. We need to design our businesses to function in a world that is increasingly demanding high ethical standards, and that quickly exposes dishonesty.

User experience design is the handle du jour. But the methodologies and philosophies, insights and principles that drive it will endure. Embracing and evolving them is the only way our industry will continue to succeed.

Welcome to the experience era

BY **WILL NOVOSEDLIK**

The one-way industrial brand era is over. Now time for the heavy lifting

The word "experience" has come to mean many different things. These days, the lexicon includes customer, brand, user and retail experience, as well as experiential marketing and experience design.

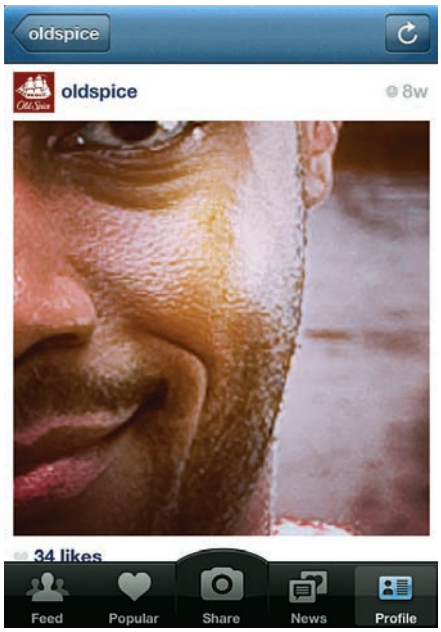
This profusion of jargon is evidence of a much deeper shift in the means and modes of marketing: from transaction to relationship, from push to pull, from mass to micro and ultimately, from messaging to experience.

It's safe to say that the entirely digital user experience was the catalyst. As was foretold by the digerati of the late '90s, almost everything commercial has migrated online, and web 1.0 and 2.0 have reshaped both the way we experience brands and our expectations in all other channels. How else do you explain Old Spice's "The Man Your Man Could Smell Like"?

Market research confirms that people no longer expect just to be sold to. A 2008 Nielsen study exposed the growing distrust of marketing messages, with only 14% of respondents saying they trust ads. In a 2011 Havas Media Lab study, most respondents reported that they couldn't care less if 80% of the brands out there disappeared tomorrow.

I suspect a big part of this indifference to marketing is because the better part of its output is mediocre. The great stuff is rare, and generally much more successful, such as Target Communications' Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism campaigns, which are among the most emotionally compelling works of advertising art ever.

WILL NOVOSEDLIK is VP brand & design thinking at Idea Couture.



But as Old Spice and others have taught us, people expect their advertising to be an engaging experience. People are actively influencing and shaping the experience they have with brands, if not the brands themselves. With that kind of power, there's no going back to just being passive recipients of push marketing.

As people increasingly internalize brands as experience, things like experiential marketing and retail experience take on new relevance. In both of these contexts, marketing becomes physical theatre, with the store and the street acting as the stage of active engagement. Throw mobile into the mix and you have the experience captured and shared as it becomes content for a hungry social ecosystem.

This bleeding of one medium into another demands a holistic view of the entire brand experience spectrum, and the flexibility to respond to its increasingly dynamic nature. In a 24/7 data-rich and data-driven environment, the content of today's customer conversations becomes tomorrow's research data, next quarter's integrated campaign, and next year's products.

Which brings us to the last term in this emerging lexicon: customer experience. It has come to mean something that lies outside the realm, but not the influence, of marketing. It not only refers to the design of customer-facing touchpoints, but also the operational infrastructure that supports them. It encompasses the heavy lifting that needs to be done so that the operation delivers on the brand. It's really a systems requirements exercise, and not just in IT but also in customer care, finance, and product and service design.

It's a process that involves methodical, detailed engineering and cross-functional integration. It almost always exposes the need for organizational change, as it is a traditional management consulting practice area. Thus it's an arena where agencies are neither equipped nor interested to do battle.

The best customer experience platforms are tightly integrated with what the brand stands for and promises.

As both the enabler and the handmaiden of commerce, mass marketing has performed superbly for decades, despite the boom-bust cycle. As the engine of demand creation, planned obsolescence, and endless growth, marketing has been both the infantry and the artillery of industrial era economics. But it's been a one-way enterprise, with industry in the driver's seat. Now customers have increasing power and are demanding a much better experience than what industry has offered them thus far.

The industrial era is over. Long live the experience era.

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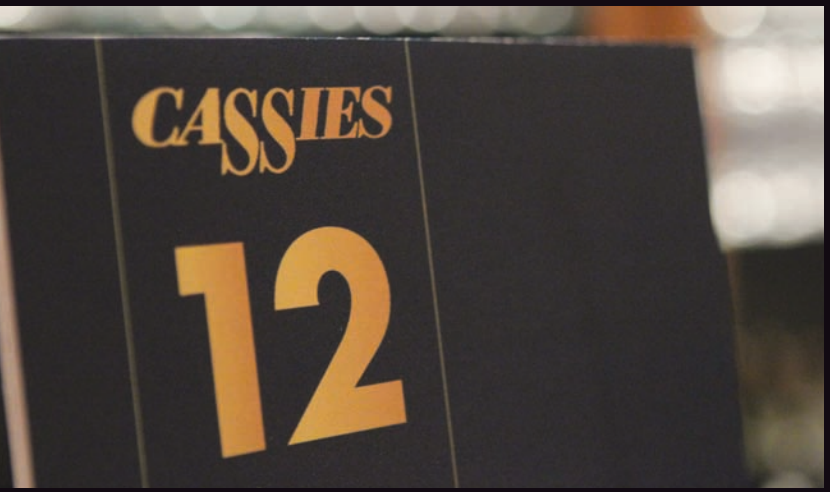
The 2012 CASSIES, held Jan. 23 at the Ritz-Carlton in Toronto, celebrated the most effective campaigns in Canada. Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism took home the top prize, and a good time was had by all.

1. Andrew Saunders, VP advertising sales, the *Globe and Mail*, introduced the inaugural Globe Creative Effectiveness Prize | **2.** MC David Gibb, JWT EVP & MD (second from left) and a Gold winning team from Kruger: Humberto Baruzzi, marketing manager; Mario Gosselin, COO; Arthur Fleischmann, president, John St.; Heather Crawley, team leader, john st.; Wendy Mommersteeg, category director | **3.** Leo Burnett's Natasha Dagenais and David Buckspan, account directors on James Ready, wave their Globe Prizes | **4.** Bronze winners: Caroline Hart, group account director, Juniper Park; Kathy Matheson, VP marketing, Pepsi Foods; Michelle Crowley, sr. marketing manager, Quaker Foods; Jill Nykoliation, president, Juniper Park; Taylor Jenkins, assoc. marketing manager, Quaker Foods; Jessica Lax, sr. account director, Juniper Park; Nancy Rooney, director of marketing, Quaker Foods | 5. NABS exec director Jim Warrington and AAPQ acting GM Dominique Villeneuve | **6.** Nfld. & Labrador Tourism's marketing director Carmela Murphy, Gibb and Target's president Noel O'Dea



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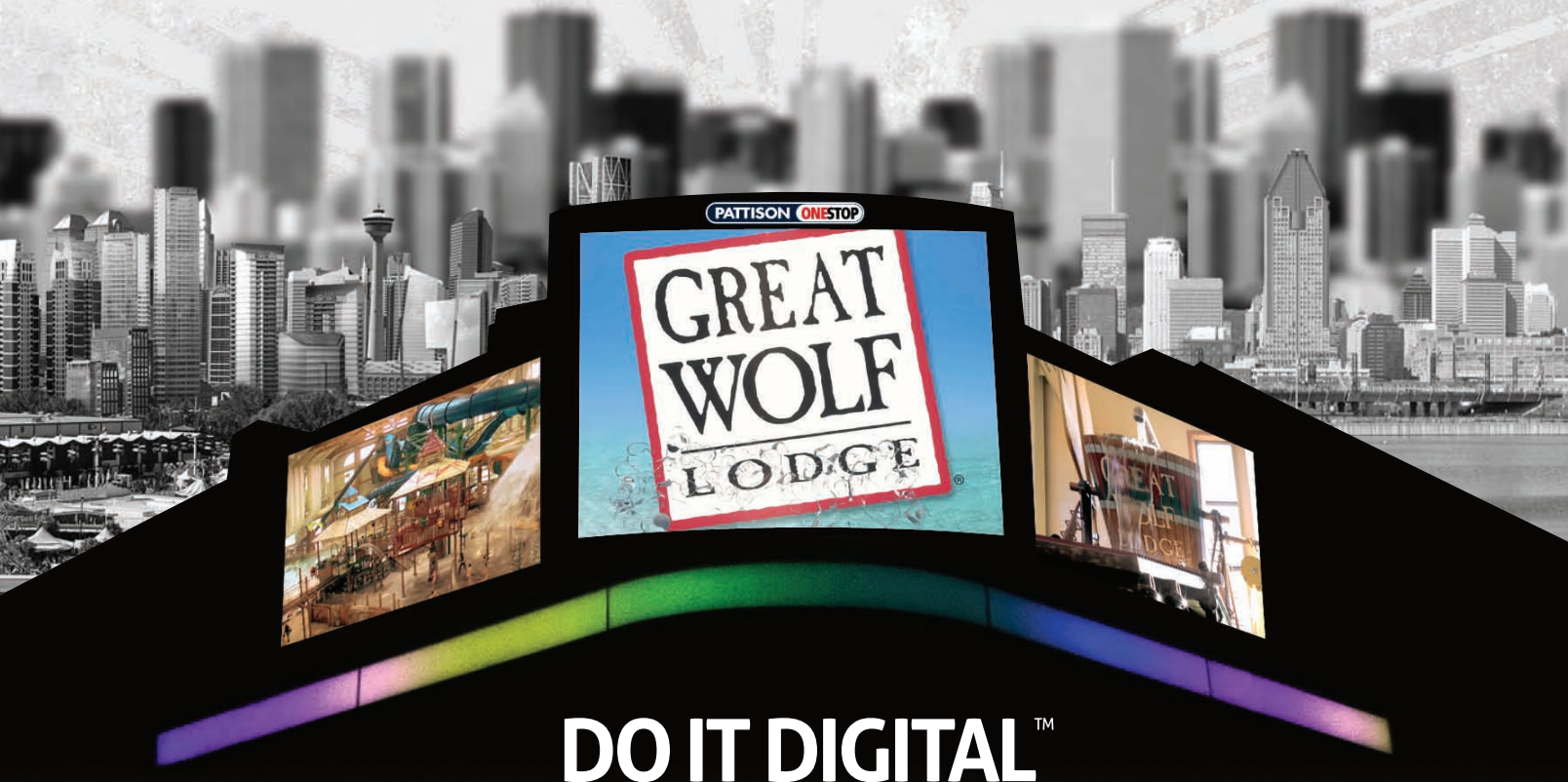

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1. If, for you, this word represents typography at its finest, the very pinnacle of perfection, the Helvetica of modern times... If, for you, this word is synonymous with love, but also with hate, because the font's growing popularity over the past few years has tarnished the special relationship you've enjoyed with it, you're a designer.

2. If, for you, this word represents a dark, imaginary city where the adventures of a masked superhero unfold; a superhero portrayed by numerous actors as the franchise was nearly run into the ground by the late 80s due to some very questionable decisions, only to be saved by Christopher Nolan's brilliant directing, you're in advertising.

3. If this word means absolutely nothing to you, you're a client.

by lg2

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